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The World of Animated Films and Comic Art

FUNNYWORLD

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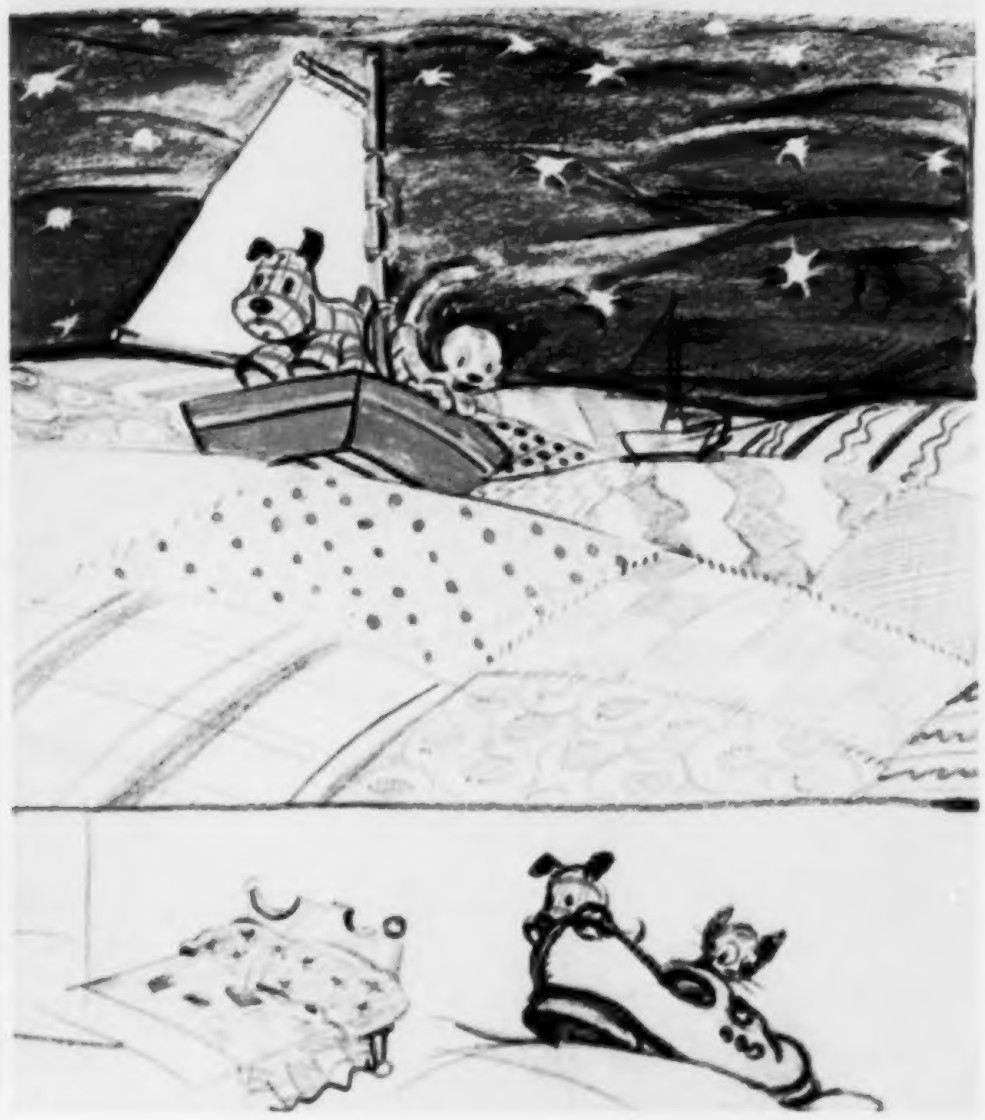
Cartoons That Never Were

A Portfolio of Artwork from Unfinished Films



Also: **Gertrude Stein in the Comics ● Carl Barks's First Years in Comics ● Bill Blackbeard: Reprint Follies**

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CHANGE IN EDITORSHIP

Mike Barrier, the Editor of *Funnyworld* since its founding, has resigned to devote his time to several other important projects, especially his forthcoming books. The magazine started out as a mimeo newsletter in 1966 and evolved into its present form.

In the future, we'd like *Funnyworld* to have more articles covering contemporary events in animation, cartooning, and comic strips while maintaining its strength in covering the history of these activities.

From now on, Funnyworld will have to rely even more upon the strength of good free-lance submissions. Any material submitted to our Editorial Board will receive prompt consideration. *Funnyworld* will be paying its contributors substantially better than in the past. Payment will be made upon acceptance, not publication. If you have a proposal to discuss, please send it to: Editorial Board, Funnyworld, Box 1633, NY NY 10001.

We hope Mike does well with his books, and we thank him for the great work he has done so far.

The Publisher

Contents

Letters to Mike Barrier 2
From Bill Blackbeard, Kim Weston, Bhob Stewart, Paul Julian, Carl Bell, Mark Kausler, Harry Love, David Carson, Thomas Sito, Jim Trainor, and Curtis Katz.

Starting Out in the Comics 12
Mike Barrier tells how Carl Barks developed as a unique comics artist in the forties; an excerpt from the forthcoming book, *Carl Barks and the Art of the Comic Book*.

Huemeresque 22
Our columnist Dick Huemer describes an unheralded "Battle of Washington."

Cartoons That Never Were 26
Several pages of drawings that provide a glimpse of some cartoons that never made it from the storyboard to the screen.

Tender Balloons: An Interview with Tom Hachtman 34
Maxine Fisher talks with the man behind *Gertrude's Follies*—the comic strip (and now the book and the movie) about Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, and all their friends.

Reviews 40
Bill Blackbeard on the sorry history of comic-strip reprinting...Mike Barrier on the *Snow White* book...Kim Weston on the new volumes reprinting classic Barks and Gottfredson stories...Barrier on *The Animation Book*...Ross Care on a deluxe set of records of music from Disney films...Barrier on *Fairy Tales and After*...Blackbeard on Popeye.

On the Cover . . . Drawings for two unfinished MGM cartoons, *The Refugee Dog* and *The Gingham Dog and the Calico Cat*; see "Cartoons That Never Were."

Editorial

By MIKE BARRIER

I think that the greatest temptation facing anyone who writes seriously about "popular culture" (a term that I dislike, but can't quite avoid) is to yield to the feeling of *deja vu*—the feeling that *everything* being done these days has been done before, and better than it is being done now. It is in the nature of the "popular culture" beast to reduce everything that has been succesful to formulas, and to work those formulas so hard that whatever freshness they once had is completely destroyed.

I am reminded of this every time I pick up a Marvel comic book, and I was reminded of it when I read one of Don Bluth's comments about the direction his new company will take, in its production of animated features. Bluth told the *New York Times* that his films would be very similar, in certain respects, to the Disney features. "It's the style we love," he said. "But the content of our features will be different. We want to do stories with a little more insight into human life, a little more hope, like Walt did in *Pinocchio* and *Snow White*. Those movies had anti-death scenes, resurrection. Recent Disney movies have been episodic and full of belly laughs."

Bluth's critique of the recent Disney features is difficult to fault (although they don't contain many belly laughs for anyone over the age of, say, nine), but the effectiveness of his remedy—to preserve the "style" while elevating the "content"—is open to question, particularly since he describes the "content" of the early Disney features in such elevated terms ("anti-death... resurrection"). The early features are admirable in ways that the more recent features are not, but they have much more to say about parents and children than about death and resurrection, and they are successful in large part because they reflect so faithfully Walt Disney's special vision of what animated films should be like. If Bluth tries to recapture that vision, at second hand, his films almost certainly will be stilted and artificial.

Last summer, I received a handsomely printed four-color brochure, a proposal for a film to be called *Charlie the Leprechaun*. It is a perfect illustration of the dangers of being in thrall to the Disney idea of the animated feature. Here is a bit of the story:

"...Leprechauns lived peacefully and happily amongst the grassy hills of Ireland; secure in the fact that each has hidden a pot of gold to protect themselves should they be captured. Their peaceful existence was disturbed by the Banshee Queen, who because of her greed for gold, waged battle against the strong hearted Leprechauns. Such is our story. The story of Charlie, the son

Funnyworld No. 22. Pam Clement, Publisher, and Editorial Coordinator. All correspondence should be directed to *Funnyworld*, P.O. Box 1633, New York, New York 10001.

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Illustration credits: Robert Allen, Roger Armstrong, Carl Barks, John Benson, Bill Blackbeard, Don Bluth Productions, E. B. Boather, Dick Canemaker, Friz Freleng, Dick Huemer, Rudolf Ising, Wilfred Jackson, Harry Love, David R. Smith.

of the Leprechaun King who was killed in battle. The story of the boy prince who was saved from doom by Saint Patrick, and raised by the faithful Bogle when the Banshee Queen was banished from Ireland...

"Charlie...lived a tranquil yet somewhat lonely life. No real friends, except Feather, a small duck rescued from an evil Banshee. It was while in the forest with Feather and his other animal friends that Charlie felt an icy chill, heard the screaming winds, and knew that the Banshee Queen had returned..."

The Disney connection is confirmed by the brochure's illustrations, all of them of characters who look like they were considered and rejected for one of the Disney features of the fifties; the characters are not only drawn in a Disney style, but with such Disney embellishments as colored ink lines.

Charlie, the brochure says, "has value not only as an entertainment film, but as a return to QUALITY animated motion pictures... One can see by this presentation that the artists are ready. What is needed is the producer-backer who wants to reach for such quality in an animated motion picture."

The price tag last spring (probably it has been marked up since then) was a mere $7.8 million.

Ridiculous as *Charlie the Leprechaun* is, there can be no doubt that it is a serious effort to marry Disney "style" with Disney "content." This is what is most awful about it. Not only were the early Disney features successful, they were so overpoweringly successful that many people can no longer conceive of any other way to make a "quality" animated feature except by aping the Disney films. If there is anything worse than a formula, it is a formula that is wielded by people who can see nothing else.

Animation does not need any more Disney imitators, nor does it need any more people who self-righteously turn their backs on all that the Disney studio accomplished. What it *does* need are people who are determined to absorb all of the lessons that the classic Disney films have to offer—and then set about making films that have their own identity. It is in the hope of seeing such films that I continue to follow animation with interest; it is the absence of such films that makes me wonder why I bother.

Publications. John Benson is esteemed by everyone who knows him as the editor of *Squa Tront*, a magazine devoted to the EC comic books and their offshoots. He has now begun *Panels*, a magazine that embraces comic books of all kinds; the first issue includes interviews with Will Eisner of *The Spirit*, Jules Feiffer (about his work with Eisner in the forties), and a reprint of a 1973 article by Bill Griffith, the underground cartoonist, about the then-new "barbarian" comics. I read Griffith's piece in an underground newspaper when it first appeared, and I remember thinking at the time that he was a bit of a crank for raising objections to the work of artists like Richard Corben (who is clearly a principal target, although he is never named). Now, in these days of *Heavy Metal* and other such excesses, Griffith looks more like a prophet than a crank; *Panels* is worth buying for his piece alone, although the Eisner and Feiffer interviews are excellent. The first issue also contains some good reviews of recent books and underground comics. *Panels* may be ordered (at $2.50 per copy) from John Benson, 205 W. 80th St., No. 2E, New York, N.Y. 10024.

Cartonaggio is that *rare avis* among comics fan magazines, one devoted to comic *strips*. A large part of the content is made up of reprints from *Editor and Publisher*, the newspaper trade journal, but there is original material, too; the sixth issue, for example, includes an article on H.T. Webster. Subscriptions are $2.50 for four issues from Dr. A.D. Stewart, P.O. Box 474, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, Tex. 76308.

Letters to Mike Barrier

Bill Blackbeard, curator of the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art and co-editor of The Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics, *wrote in response to two parts of* Funnyworld *No. 20: Dick Huemer's column titled "The Bilking of Bunny," about the fleecing of newspaper cartoonist "Bunny" Schultze by the inventors of an "animation machine," and Kim Weston's review of Abbeville Press's first two volumes reprinting the work of Carl Barks (*Donald Duck*) and Floyd Gottfredson (*Mickey Mouse*). Weston's review of the most recent Abbeville volumes,* Uncle Scrooge *and* Goofy, *appears in this issue's reviews column.*

From BILL BLACKBEARD: The new *Funnyworld* was worth the full newsstand price to me for the delightful Dick Huemer piece alone. I can't express in this short space and time the invaluable revelation Huemer's marvelously funny piece provided for my records. It has always seemed apparent to me, from the context of the *Foxy Grandpa* strip (and I fully share Huemer's aversion to it as narrative and concept) that Schultze was a simpleton. However, specific biographical data demonstrating this (aside from the implications of the man's early blowing of a turn-of-the-century fortune earned by his strip and later dying in poverty while he drew Foxy Grandpa for friendly neighborhood kids) was lacking until now. I would certainly be the last person to "question the validity" of Huemer's yarn, having suffered through the reading of some 300-plus *Foxy Grandpa* episodes awhile back, trying to find just *one* that would measure up, in point and payoff, to the other strip material in my Smithsonian book. (As the published book attests, I didn't find it.)

Yet the strip *looks* good, it must be admitted. And this element must have led to the fame and popularity it enjoyed in its day. For, just as Segar (in Coulton Waugh's inelegant but perceptive phrase) "drew funny," so did Bunny Schultze draw *lovably*. The bunny signature you used for the article suggests this appeal (as Huemer's approximation of F. Grandpa himself

on this page does not, unfortunately). But Schultze simply had no grasp of comic point or anecdotal variety, so that once the public tired of simply being charmed by Schultze's inarguably appealing art and started paying attention to the trivial weekly "gag" itself, it quickly became bored with F.G. and his unimaginatively prankish nephews. (The conceptual ineptness of the strip was accentuated after Hearst bought Schultze away from the N.Y. *Herald* and began running *Foxy Grandpa* side by side with the genuinely inspired juvenile hellions of Rudolph Dirks's *Katzenjammer Kids* strip. After a year or so of this sad contrast, Hearst banished Schultze's work to his second-string line of syndicated features, dropping it from his nationally distributed color Sunday section, and did not renew the artist's contract.)

I wish to hell Huemer had been able to photograph that animation machine. And I wonder if it was used as evidence later on in the trial of the two swindlers, thus possibly still residing in some dusty municipal storage bin among boxes of city court records, etc. It's sort of nice to think so.

The other piece I found of unusual interest was Kim Weston's review of the Abbeville Press *Duck* and *Mouse* reprint collections. I have had no opportunity to examine the *Duck* book against my Barks files (and figured, in any event, that *you* would do that job in due time—or, as you did with Weston, have it adequately handled), but I'm not surprised at Weston's revelations about the cuts and distortions made in the originals. He is much more sanguine about the crime that I could be (possibly because he wants to see these books sell, in the—forlorn—hope that success here will provide for later collections of the same sort done more faithfully), and seems unaware that *all* Barks fans are "scholarly researchers" so far as continuity integrity is concerned, and that the reader he thinks is going to be excited over a chopped rarity like "Maharajah Donald" just doesn't exist. (A casual Barks fan? There ain't no such. *Certainly* none that will buy this book to *read*, once said fan is aware of the cuts and page reshaping involved.

Picking it up as a Barks completist, as he may do, is another matter altogether, of course.) No really involved Barks collector has to buy the book for something like "Maharajah Donald" anyway, since an underground market in color Xerox copies of this and many other Barks rarities has long been active, at prices well below the staggering dealer ripoffs levied for the originals.

As for the Abbeville Press *Mickey Mouse* collection, the book is blown for the Gottfredson devotee on sight by the simple addition of the phony (non-studio, non-Gottfredson) color to what were originally black-and-white daily strips, a point Weston oddly fails to mention. I did note some missing episodes in glancing through the book with thorough distaste, but haven't yet made an episode-by-episode check against my files. However, I *have* done this with the *Topolino d'Oro* series of Mondadori, which Weston indirectly praises by his reference to the "far fewer" omissions of strip episodes in this series (than is found in the Abbeville Press volume), and I mention as typical the Mondadori reprint of the Gottfredson Tanglefoot strip narrative of 1933, in which *forty-three* episodes are omitted from an original run of one

hundred and two episodes. (To add insult to injury, the lunatic editors of this volume fill in a following sizable number of text pages with a cut version of *another*, shorter MM story, *plus* some Sunday page episodes—all of which might have been filled with more of the original Tanglefoot story.) If this sort of thing constitutes "far fewer" cuts than the chops in the Abbeville Press volume (which Weston minimizes in his carefully chosen, no-big-deal terms just before his reference to the Mondadori series), I rest appalled at the critical judgement involved.

Basically, Weston seems to presume an audience of pathetic slobs out there who are happy to buy and laugh it up with slashed versions of their favorite strips, and he seems to think those books are quite good enough for them. Well, dammit, they *aren't*—they aren't good enough to wipe the reader's you-know-what in the john. I know the rage I encounter daily here at the Academy in letter after letter from people sick at the cuts in the very Nostalgia *Terry* books Weston mentions with apparent approval, at the cuts in the *Annie* and *Tracy* and *Buck Rogers* books long on sale, at the cuts in the *Scorchy Smith*, *Secret Agent X-9*, and *Flash Gordon* books, also from Nostalgia Press. Sure, it makes the Academy money, since our copier works day and night (literally) running *complete* runs of all these strips for people ripped off by the original volumes, but as a scholar and collector myself, I am appalled at the havoc wrought on original continuity by virtually all reprint collections of comic strips published from 1896 to date. (And to complete the point I'm making without sparing myself, I'm as sick as other strip afficionados at the mindless publishers' omission of an episode from the Popeye continuity in *my* Smithsonian/Abrams collection—it *has* been replaced in the current, second edition—and at the often miserable printing of the textually complete strip runs in my Hyperion series. The only difference here is that I'm at least aware of and concerned about such things, while the other publishers and editors involved with reprint books seem essentially contemptuous of both their readers and their subject matter.) The point is, strip readers *do* care, a helluva lot, about textual integrity of comic strips, and a lot of them are already at their windows, yelling "we aren't going to take it any more!" Anything I can do to swell that chorus, I intend to do—and Weston's somewhat more forceful joining-in would be appreciated.

KIM WESTON replies: Bill says much that I agree with and a few things I can't—he's just plain wrong. The readers and fans who will get excited about the Abbeville *Donald Duck* are out there in large numbers. I know dozens of people who bought the books and though many were disappointed with the cuts and format changes, only one refused to buy it because of the butchery inflicted on the stories. Contrary to Bill's statement, there are a lot of casual Barks fans who can't afford outright or can't justify the cost of buying the originals and instead collect reprints and/or poor reading copies of the originals and there are others who read the comics as kids and are now getting them for their own kids (and themselves as well). *If* you could get poor reading copies of the stories at half the good price, the comics reprinted in the book still add up to $230, plus another $300 for "Maharajah Donald," and at the very modest cost of fifty cents a page, even color xeroxes of the contents would add up to more than $150. The fact that even so butchered a book as this sold out so quickly is a sad commentary of the state of reprints in this country in relation to the desperation of fans for *any* copies of many of those fine old Barks stories and the market among the general public. I know of people who bought the book and don't like things about it but none who would give it up. They will *read* this book, because they don't have many of the stories in any other form. I won't read the book, but unlike most people, I've got all the originals.

As for the *Mouse*, I agree more or less with most of what Bill has to say. I would rather see black and white, but I can live with the color. Bill, I'm sure, has all the *Mickey Mouse* strips. Since, as mentioned in the review, my original reference material for *Mickey Mouse* is inadequate—I have only a handful of the original strips—I welcome his much more authoritive voice on the subject. I compared one or two episodes in the Abbeville with the one *Topolino d'Oro* I have and *Topolino d'Oro* had fewer cuts. I like the reprinting *format* (B & W, three strips to a page, large size) but I am dismayed to find that it is as butchered in its own way as is *Lost in the Andes*. Again with the Nostalgia *Terry*, it is the three-strips-to-a-page, large-size format I like, not the cuts. I can't condone the cuts any more than Bill can.

However, aside from *Mickey Mouse Magazine*, *Mickey Mouse* Color 16, and the first hundred or so issues of *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*, which are also colored and cut, the Abbeville *Mouse* is my first big sampling of Gottfredson. I enjoyed reading it. What remains is so good that I'm happy to have it. I share Bill's rage at the butchery but seventy percent Barks and Gottfredson is still better than one hundred per cent almost anyone else or zero per cent Barks and Gottfredson, which is what has existed until now. On a related subject, I have had the opportunity to see exquisitely beautiful old nitrate prints of Stroheim's *Greed* and Welles's *Magnificent Ambersons*. Fine films both—I am enraged at the butchery inflicted on them but glad to have the opportunity to see the fragments that survive. Would Bill rather have nothing survive rather than butchered versions? I think not.

Western's minor and botched efforts at special reprints of recent years have not been especially successful and it would seem that that has been used as an excuse for not doing more. So Abbeville's publication of *Mickey Mouse* and *Donald Duck* is very important not only for being very successful (saleswise) but also for the fact that Disney has let someone other than Western do comic book reprints. They should be welcomed and acclaimed for that. However, now that we have these two very successful books, and the market has been demonstrated, I would have to join with Bill in saying, "Don't give us any more of these travesties—do it right next time!!" It can be done. I'm sure Disney has proofs of most of their old strips and Western does have good negatives of most of the old comic books, so good authentic source material is available. Where such good pre-print material no longer exists, there is still adequate pre-print material in the hands of Bill (for newspaper strips) and other collectors. I sent Abbeville a copy of my review and a letter with some suggestions. Bill might do likewise (if he hasn't already). It might do some good—and wouldn't that be a pleasant surprise.

Bhob Stewart, editor of Ophemera, *wrote to take issue with my negative review in No. 20 of* The Lord of the Rings *and* Watership Down.

From BHOB STEWART: I disagree that "Both films were widely panned." I don't feel like poring through stuff to check—but *Watership Down* got innumerable favorable reviews. *Lord of the Rings* got many pans, some mixed, and several favorable. How can you make distortions like this?

I also don't understand your reference to the "badly drawn rabbit" at the beginning of *Watership Down.* Obviously, this rabbit was there to (a) form a transition between the abstract beginning and the narrative, and (b) to form a link between the film and the familiar rabbit image on the book jacket. It had a very special purpose. I think you've missed the real problem with *Watership Down*—in an effort to keep the rabbits from being "cartoons" (and nothing wrong with that), Rosen was so successful that you can't (except for the voices) distinguish one rabbit from the next. Nobody else in animation—including Bakshi—ever had this kind of problem.

Tell the truth: have you gotten so deep into animation study that you no longer enjoy it?

MIKE BARRIER replies: *Watership Down* did get mostly favorable reviews, as I discovered on checking my files. I suppose that my "distortion" can be traced to the disappointment that was expressed by almost everyone I knew who actually saw the film.

I don't see that that "badly drawn rabbit" bears any resemblance to the rabbit on the jacket of the hardcover edition and the early paperback editions. There is a faint resemblance to the rabbit on the cover of the current paperback edition (that artwork is taken from one of the *Watership Down* calendars, I think, or at least is by the calendar artist), but it is hard for me to believe that the scene in the film was made with that particular illustration in mind.

In any case, the drawing in the film is not a transitional drawing, except in the sense that it comes between the stylized introduction and the body of the film. There is an abrupt change, and not a smooth transition; and in fact, the

"badly drawn rabbit" does not bear much resemblance even to the animated rabbits in the story itself, much less to the stylized rabbit in the Hubley-designed introduction.

True, Rosen did not "cartoon" the rabbits, but he attempted to distinguish the rabbits from one another in true Hanna-Barbera fashion, by outfitting them with superficial differences of appearance and with distinctive voices. Look at stills of the rabbits: you will see that their eyes and ears and hair differ slightly—but not enough to be noticeable. The design of the characters could be called "successful" only if the rabbits were clearly distinguished from one another in a way that did not compromise the necessarily realistic drawing style.

But even better character designs would not have been enough. Rosen's rabbits still would not have *moved* like distinct individuals, even if they had looked like them. There are only brief flashes in the film of the kind of animation that reveals a character through movement, and even some of that animation (of the cat in the barnyard, for example) is not very good.

The filmmaker's task—in animation and in live-action—is to give us, in a few minutes, knowledge of his characters that we might not gain in weeks or months of casual acquaintance with such people in real life. "Cartooning" animated characters—exaggerating their characteristics—is simply one way to do that. It makes no sense to congratulate a filmmaker because he has not "cartooned" his characters when he has not come up with a satisfactory alternative; that amounts to congratulating him for not doing his job.

I suppose that my study of animation—good animation—has robbed me of the pleasure I might once have taken in a film like *Watership Down.* But if serious study has any purposes, surely one of them is to reduce one's appetite for junk.

*Paul Julian is probably best known as a designer for UPA in the late forties and early fifties (*The Tell-tale Heart *is probably the best-known example of his work for that studio), but he also painted the distinguished backgrounds for many of Friz Freleng's Warner cartoons of the forties. He wrote in response to my review of* The Lord of The Rings. *In that film, director Ralph Bakshi made unprecedentedly extensive use of rotoscoping—the tracing of photostats blown up from frames of live-action film—and Julian raised some objections to the whole idea of rotoscoping.*

From PAUL JULIAN: In spite of the forty years that I have spent making footprints in the animation industry, all the actual animation I've ever done could be spliced into a one-minute reel. Which hardly qualifies me to add a grumpy voice to the current conversation in your pages on the subject of rotoscope. But I have seen a lot of good footage and watched a lot of

good draftsmen and taken part in a lot of epic arguments.

All the convincing drawing I've ever seen has a unifying characteristic: it exaggerates. It edits and emphasizes, and whatever it has to say to its audience is a result of this emphasis. I love film because it adds the dimensions of time and motion to whatever's on the screen—and I love what animators can do with these added dimensions that can be edited and emphasized in their own personal way. Whatever the rest of us can add to these qualities within our own areas of production—by emphasis in staging; by picking up on the mood of a story sequence and painting to capitalize on it; by a certain quality of descriptive exaggeration in design—all of this is rewarding work. And whatever contribution we all make to a film in progress will ultimately help to make it a piece of entertainment, rather than the graphic equivalent of a newspaper report, a simple setting-down of facts—informative but damn dull reading. Even re-touching a product photo for a TV spot is an editorial contribution of a sort, though it's probably the smallest one that a graphic artist can make.

Yes, I'm getting to a point, which is that rotoscope material always seems to have no creative or editorial component at all. It always comes off like a straight literal transcription: no added emphasis, no distortion of the time element. Even in animation sequences where this moving machinery has been re-drawn (to fit the dimensions of a cartoon character on a model sheet) there seems to be a great and holy fear of tinkering with the timing. No one ever seems to delete three or four frames or double up on a few of them now and then. And the result for me is a sense of shock and disappointment—as if somebody had tried to quote me a limerick and had forgotten the last two lines and walked away muttering.

I have no hard evidence to prove that live-action directors and editors have learned much specifically from animation. But I am convinced that I have seen some comedy material that has been pointed and tightened up by this little trick of deleting frames; there was something like this going on in an old Alistair Sim comedy (*The Green Man*, 1957). After the failure of a bomb plot, Sim headed for his getaway car, started the engine, put the car mistakenly into reverse and backed into a police car with a dismal crunch that could only have been achieved by

trimming frames. And another sequence, from *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (1954), involved a window that was shut four frames too late to keep a fireworks rocket from coming through. Lovely stuff and marvelously funny.

This, then, was for me the reason why *Snow White's* rotoscoped Prince fell on his duff. Nothing creative at all was going on. And this is the reason that all roto material is a similarly dreadful prolonged pratfall; even more than a north-south projector ride or a lack of decision in the actual tracing of the image. Computer animation comes off the same way: once the instrument has been fed and told what to do, we get an awed humility that supersedes any kind of breakout creative component.

There's another reason for my uneasiness about roto footage. I have always been fascinated by how much storytelling impact can be made by the held drawing; not because I'm an illustrator but because a short intercut scene (as with the Papa Bear in Chuck Jones's *Bear for Punishment*) gives the animation following it a graphic pace in the formal sense of ballet. We are reminded that we are looking at drawings that are alive, whoever is timing and directing the footage. And in the course of this graphic action the lovely little bits of personality animation come in like cadenzas in somebody's concerto; precisely because they become small breakout exaggerations of their context. By contrast with this we get the unaltered crawliness of rotoscope action, in which a held frame looks like a mistake.

In other words animation seems to have a hell of a lot to do with the *phrasing* of movement. One good director's sense of phrasing has always differed from another's, just as they talk in different voices. (I am thinking of the profound differences between a Chuck Jones picture and a Friz Freleng picture. Or between a Bobe Cannon and a John Hubley.) But a director who is working with rotoscope stuff, no matter what pains he takes in supervising the actors who are being screened for it—this director is taking a giant step toward anonymity. Once he has the material, what can he do with it? Will his animators have the judgment to edit the acting—to break it down into separate cel levels and get rid of some of the squirminess? Or can they relieve it of

its constraint and constipation by redrawing and accenting it as if it were straight animation? Not bloody likely. Even in a case where the producer's primary interest is in some specific area other than cheaper footage and saving a buck.

I have toiled away in several studios (before I began free-lancing) where a lot of extremely competent designers came up with a hundred different approaches to model sheets. Some of them were highly stylized and highly artistic, but all of the best ones had something in common—they were well constructed for animating, and their style emphasized certain characteristics that could be picked up in motion by the animators (look at the droopy wrists of Richard Williams's witch in No. 20). This is the useful, purposeful abstraction that an animator should be working with; and from the start, from the first action roughs.

All of these things are (I think) part of living animation. Giving them up appears to demand the substitution of other qualities that no one so far seems to have any remarkable grasp of. And in pointing this out I hope that I have stepped on a lot of toes other than Ralph Bakshi's. Certainly a lot of feet got in the way.

Carl Bell received screen credit as a "key animator" on The Lord of the Rings, *and his letter was obviously inspired by my skepticism about that film. With his letter, he enclosed photocopies of the two pages of my* Fearless Fang *comic strip that appeared in* Funnyworld *No. 13, in 1971.*

From CARL BELL: Some time ago, in the days of the less slick, funded format of *Funnyworld*, two pages of *Fearless Fang* by Mike Barrier were published. Perhaps it might be time to reprint these pages, so that the individual reader might judge the credentials and qualifications of the critic to judge the work of others.

In today's audiences, each man, or woman, decides for himself, or herself, on the entertainment merits of any film. The writings of a critic are only the opinions of one man, or woman, after all. Films are made for mass audiences and their individual appreciations.

MIKE BARRIER replies: *Fearless Fang*, for those who were not reading *Funnyworld* almost ten years ago, was a comics feature, written and drawn by me, that was published in three issues of the magazine—Nos. 10 and 11 (mimeographed issues, with very low circulation) and No. 13, the second offset-printed issue. Working on *Fearless Fang* was enjoyable and instructive for me, and the results didn't look out of place in a little mimeographed magazine. They definitely looked out of place in No. 13, and I dropped the strip after that issue, because, as I explained in No. 14, "the rest of *Funnyworld* has gotten so professional that it makes 'Fang' look even more amateurish than it really is."

I'm not sure why Bell brings up *Fearless Fang* now, almost nine years after its last appearance; it is as if I were to condemn *The Lord of the Rings* because Ralph Bakshi was once associated with *Deputy Dawg*. Bell would have a point *if* the strip were running in the magazine now, *if* it were still amateurishly drawn, and *if* I were holding it up as an example of the finest in comic art. But none of those conditions holds, so I must assume that Bell's point is that I am not qualified to judge the work of others (Ralph Bakshi, for example) because I cannot draw like Rembrandt. That is a donkey's game; if I could draw like Rembrandt, I am sure that Bell could invent other "qualifications" that I lacked. The only "qualification" that matters to such people is approval of their work.

The implication of Bell's letter is that regardless of what we unqualified critics may have said about *The Lord of the Rings*, the public embraced it. An interesting thought, which can easily be put to the test if Bakshi will just make Part II of *Rings* and offer it to his public for its approval. I am quite sure that will never happen, because Bakshi knows Part II would be greeted not only by critical scorn (unless it was radically different from Part I) but by empty theaters.

This is the second insulting letter from one of Ralph Bakshi's stooges that I have published (the first, by John Sparey, assistant director of *Rings*, was published in No. 19), and it will be the last. On the other hand, the letters column will always be open to any member of Bakshi's staff who wishes to offer a serious defense of his employer's films, or to explain some aspect of their production. Carl Bell, for example, might want to explain how someone who traces photographs for a living can by any stretch of the imagination be considered an "animator."

I. Klein, the veteran animator, writer, and magazine cartoonist, contributed an article on the Screen Gems studio of the thirties to Funnyworld *No. 20. That article was the subject of letters from Mark Kausler, a Hollywood animator, and Harry Love, a former Screen Gems animator and director who is now an associate producer with the Hanna-Barbera studio.*

From MARK KAUSLER: The Screen Gems cartoons were on television from the early fifties to the late sixties in some cases, when television stations started demanding color cartoons (no matter what the quality). All the Screen Gems pictures—even the Color Rhapsodies—were released to TV in black and white. The color cartoons that Columbia made featured few continuing characters except the Fox and the Crow, who were in only twenty-three cartoons, probably not enough for the daily grind of TV.

The Krazy Kat cartoon Klein refers to is *Li'l Anjil*, released March 19, 1936. It is perhaps the closest copy of Herriman's style to be done in full animation, although some smoothing and evening of shapes was done to make the characters more animatable. The animation hardly looks like the film was made as a "cheater," although the story, as Klein puts it, was not too well worked out. Perhaps the decision not to work too closely with Herriman's concept was wise at the time Charles Mintz produced Krazy Kat, for Herriman's strip never caught on in a big way with the general public, and appeared in very few papers. It was only with a few perceptive critics such as Gilbert Seldes that the strip found much appreciation. As recently as the sixties, Gene Deitch produced a new series of Krazy Kat cartoons for Al Brodax that were total misreadings of Herriman's strip. I suspect that the *Krazy Kat* comic strip's special magic just doesn't work beyond the comics page.

The Color Rhapsody called *Glee Worms* (released June 24, 1936) is obviously the cartoon Klein is referring to on page 41. The cartoon is not as elaborate as he claims, for it features three main characters, two fireflies and a crafty spider, and the only crowd scenes are at the beginning during the "Glow Worm" song, and they are brief in duration.

The Screen Gems cartoons are probably the most topical ever made, especially during the early thirites, with a lot of caricature subjects such as *Scrappy's Party* and *Hollywood Goes Krazy*, references to the stock market crash (*Lambs Will Gamble* and *Prosperity Blues*), and references to the pre-World War II situation in *Peaceful Neighbors* (1939). A lot of these cartoons are fascinating comments on their times and would appeal to students and specialized audiences. If stories were the Screen Gems weak spot, I've seen a lot poorer story organization in recent pictures. Columbia is missing a bet by not doing more with their cartoon backlog.

From HARRY LOVE: I would like to make a few comments on the Izzy Klein article concerning the Charles Mintz studio. In 1930, Mr. Mintz brought his key men to California. Most were given two-year contracts; I was given a five-year contract since I was not quite eighteen years of age and was animating (a record not yet broken by any professional animator).

I thought it important to mention these animators, writers, and directors. I am enclosing some photos with names and classifications which you will find self-explanatory. Sid Marcus and Dick Huemer joined us just a couple of weeks after we arrived in Los Angeles. Mr. Klein did not start at our studio till some time after the enclosed photos were taken. I am certain he remembers us but neglected to give due credit. Another disagreement with Klein: our cartoons were doing very well and received good reviews in the trades until the untimely death of Mr. Mintz, a man of great integrity, kindness, and generosity.

Incidentally, *The Bill Poster* [a still from that cartoon illustrated the Klein article] was a cartoon that I wrote and directed when I was about twenty-two years of age.

The case of the discontinued pencil...continues. In an interview in Funnyworld *No. 19, Richard Williams lamented the discontinuation of the Mars-Omnichrom pencil. In No. 20, Kitty Belendez, national advertising manager for J. S. Staedtler, Inc., manufacturers of the Mars-Omnichrom pencil, wrote to say that the pencil was not being discontinued after all. And now comes David Carson, to say that Richard Williams was talking about another pencil altogether.*

From DAVID CARSON: Mars-Omnichrom is not the tracing pencil used, but omnium-color. Omnium-color is a Baignol & Farjon product,

and is made in France. Using the omnium-color myself, I find it far superior to the Staedtler product—so with the omnium-color indeed being discontinued, there is a panic. May I suggest that Kitty Belendez, being interested in animation (I assume from her having read this magazine), could do some research to improve their pencil to the omnium-color standard. This I am sure would open a whole new market of animation buyers.

In Funnyworld *No. 20, I raised the question of whether* Funnyworld's *coverage should be expanded into areas tangential to the magazine's main concerns. Several readers reacted to that suggestion.*

From THOMAS SITO: I am a young professional swimming about the mainstream of animation in New York and Los Angeles, continually worrying about which way the current is flowing. My comrades and I many times would amble down to Gotham Books on Forty-seventh Street or Larry Edmunds on Hollywood Boulevard to slake our thirst for knowledge in your curious magazine.

It seems that your magazine is perhaps the only forum available to animated film and comic art outside of a few columns and articles in trade magazines. This is a large responsibility, when you think of it, being the collective forum for an entire artistic form—that is, if you wish to be.

Despite such good articles as the one on Richard Williams (No. 19) and "The Filming of *Fritz the Cat*" (Nos. 14 and 15), and your reviews, the majority of your articles lean much too heavily on Disney and the past. I wonder if you consider your work as being that of a journalist or a curator or both.

Animation is a strange medium. It's an industrialized, unionized, mass-produced art form (apologies to all independents, long may you wave) with an unnatural fixation on its past. I can imagine where live film would be if all flimmakers were convinced they would never outdo Griffith.

But this attitude does exist among the young, especially. One of the most disturbing things I hear now from my peers is, "*Pinocchio, Snow White,* WOW! We'll never be able to do that again." If so, maybe we should put our pencils down and forget it.

Part of this phenomenon's cause is our nostalgic overindulgence in our past. When reverence and respect reach a level of over-saturation, it excuses negative growth.

A current method to measure professionalism among animators is how often they've read that Disney called Stokowski "Stokey" and if they can recall Milt Kahl's shoe size.

Now before anybody thinks, "Who is he to damn the artists of the golden age? They were far better than anyone now!", let me say without reservation that I think the masters of the thirties and forties have for too long been ignored, allowed to retire or pass away without the chance to tell their stories. In that area, your magazine has been of inestimable value. I only hope that our efforts will be as worthy of appreciation in our old age.

So, Mr. Barrier, I want to ask you, is your magazine about animation and comic art or animation history? Is it right to read your magazine for a finger on the pulse of animation today or for yet another critical analysis of Newman's Laugh-O-grams? Besides an article on the Hyperion studio and an interview with Roy Williams, how about a look at Nelvana studios in Toronto or on Sheridan College with its animation thesis courses? How about "animation and unionism 1940-1980"? Or, if you dare, a critical analysis of "animation 1940-1980—what went right, what went wrong." How about some good old-fashioned yellow journalism in the spirit of your strong but fair reviews of *Raggedy Ann and Andy* and *The Lord of the Rings*?

Perhaps, with an attitude pointed more at the future with the lessons of the past in hand, you'll get more Richard Williamses and Bruno Bozzettos to write about.

If not, well, let's sit back and listen again as to how *Fantasia* evolved and who was second-unit assistant to Bill Tytla on *Dumbo*.

Winston Churchill, not a bad painter at that, put it nicely: "Art without tradition is like a sheep without a shepherd. Art without innovation is like a corpse." (You remember Churchill? Wasn't he the voice of Geppetto?)

From JIM TRAINOR: In your most recent editorial, you suggest the necessity of expanding *Funnyworld*'s

horizons. I certainly agree that the magazine's scope is too limited; however, I don't feel it is necessary to stray from the subject of animation and comic art.

For a magazine that purports to be about "the world of animation," *Funnyworld* seems to devote a disproportionate space to Walt Disney. In fact, of the last four issues' seventeen or so major articles, eight dealt exclusively with Disney animation. Aside from the marginal attention given to other Hollywood studios—I am particularly confused by the lack of major Warner Brothers material—I feel that modern trends in animation are being skimped. Although I found the Oskar Fischinger and George Griffin pieces refreshing, I feel that a few more steps in this direction are needed to make *Funnyworld* a well-rounded publication.

The late John Hubley, for instance, has been mentioned on several occasions. Why not a feature article on his life and work? The same goes for Caroline Leaf, Janet Perlman, Adam Beckett, Ryan Larkin, all extraordinary filmmakers whose work remains somewhat obscure. By focusing on current independent animators, *Funnyworld* could serve to remedy this situation.

No. 20 included my two-part article on the Disney studio's planned animated feature, The Black Cauldron; *in the second part of that article, I sharply criticized the Lloyd Alexander books on which the film will be based. One reader found my criticisms hard to swallow.*

From CURTIS KATZ: Regarding your critique of Lloyd Alexander's Prydain novels, which appeared in *Funnyworld* No. 20 with an article about the Disney studio's forthcoming animated feature *The Black Cauldron:* I must take exception to certain remarks you made that touch on the fundamental essence of fantasy literature.

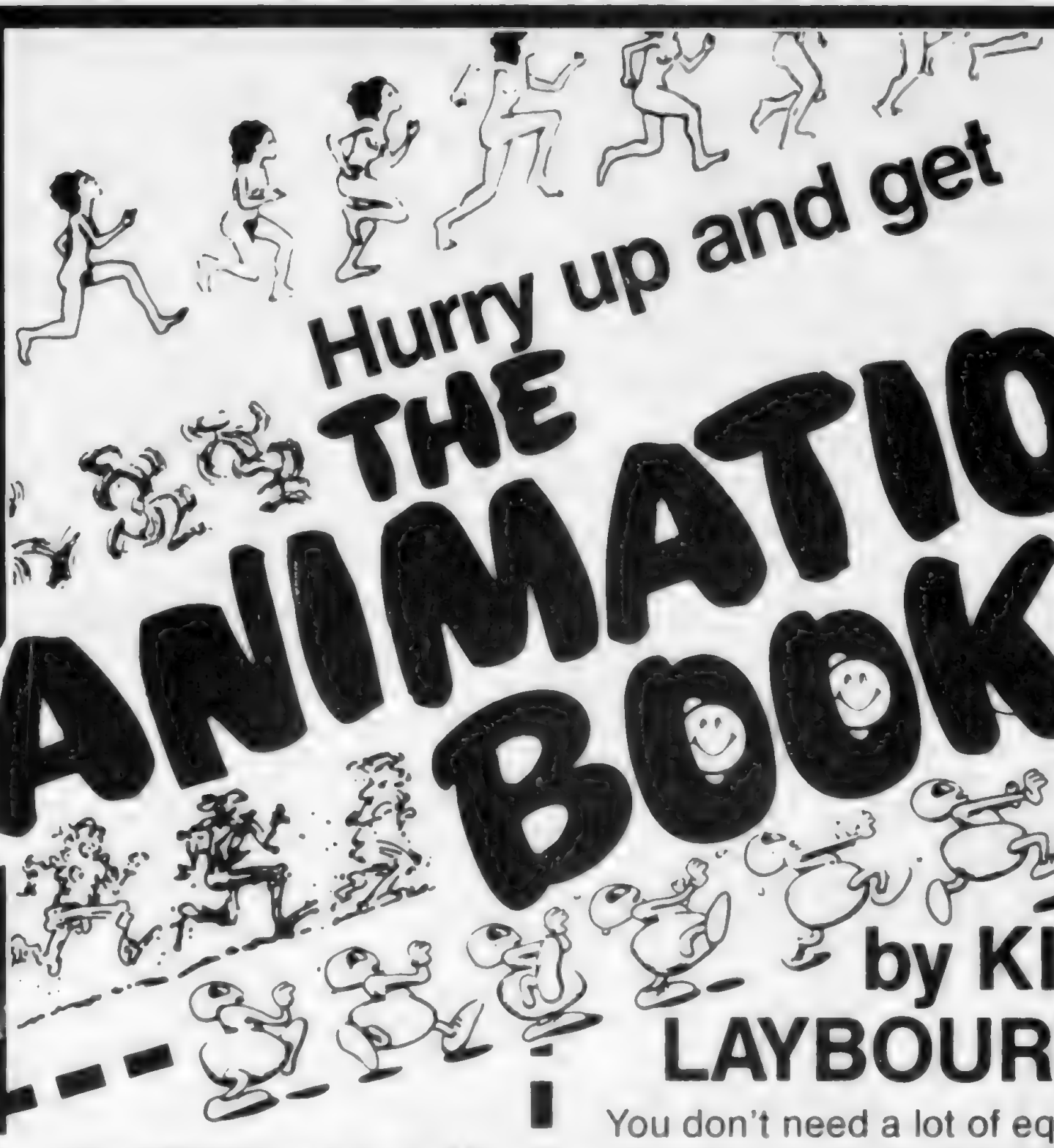
In the course of your examination of the Prydain stories, you express the thought that it is impossible to combine a heroic fantasy with a story about growing into maturity, and that in attempting to do so, author Alexander "tries to mix oil and water," as you put it. I would like to propose that not only are these two kinds of story not mutually exclusive, but that growing up is what heroic fantasy is inherently about. In text and subtext, such stories, with their battles, magic, evils, and epic journeys, confront and handle the conflicts, mysteries, and fears that we all must encounter as we journey through life: a journey that is the unending process of "growing up." Viewed in this light, heroic fantasy refutes your contention that, "there could be no honest-to-goodness 'happily ever after' in a book that is supposed to be about growing up, as well as about a fairy-tale conflict between good and evil." Traditional heroic fantasy assures us that in life as in fable we *can* reach for eternal happiness, and we need not have to merely "make the most of the short life of pain and toil we are stuck with." Furthermore, I suspect that the presence of this universal theme of maturation, underscoring stories set in worlds that transcend the limits of time, space, and culture, might well account for why heroic fantasy, in the context of myths, fables, and fairy tales, has been the basic literature of societies around the world since the beginning of civilization. In any event, it takes more than just swordplay and adventure to make a literary genre endure for thousands of years.

Your remarks are doubly surprising in view of your obvious familiarity with the films of Walt Disney. Many of the Disney animated features clearly demonstrate that fantasy is inseparable from the theme of growing up in all its aspects, physical, mental, and spiritual. Bambi matures from a fawn to a stag, Wendy attempts to avoid the trials of adolescence by escaping to Never Never Land with Peter Pan, and Snow White, Pinocchio, and Sleeping Beauty must be transformed through death and resurrection before their goals are attained.

I must confess to having never read the Prydain books, so I cannot state an opinion as to whether they blend heroic fantasy and the subject of growing up with traditional subtlety, or with such clumsiness as to apparently make you doubt that the two motifs can ever be successfully combined. Regardless, I trust that if the Disney studio follows its own precedent, its adaptation of Alexander's stories, *The Black Cauldron*, will indeed be a heroic fantasy about growing up, complete with an "honest-to-goodness 'happily ever after.' "

I was greatly intrigued by your proposal made elsewhere in *Funnyworld* No. 20 that your magazine expand its coverage to include topics that are tangential to the sphere of "animated films and comic art," notably the subject of children's literature. I am looking forward to this expansion, but do hope you will consider carefully the nature and function of children's literature before you commit your thoughts on this topic to print.

MIKE BARRIER replies: In referring to "heroic fantasy," I specifically had in mind books like those by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert E. Howard, and, I am afraid, J. R. R. Tolkien, all of whom have much more to say about arrested development than about growing up. Of course, if one spreads one's net wide enough—that is, if one uses the term "heroic fantasy" to describe just about any work of fiction that serves one's purpose—then of course one can make a plausible argument that heroic fantasy is "inherently about" growing up. But in books of the kind that I had in mind and in Alexander's books as well—most of the perils that confront the hero are unambiguous; they might as well come equipped with king-size warning labels. As I tried to say in my article, this view of life, as being divided neatly between the good guys and the bad guys, is not one that can be held easily by anyone who has passed through puberty, yet it is basic to most books that deal in what I consider "heroic fantasy." I have no special objections to such books; I have read some of them with pleasure, and more of them with distaste (Howard in particular is a hopelessly stupid and childish writer), but as bland escapist reading, they don't invite strong responses of any kind from an educated reader. When a book moves beyound the simple black-and-white formulas of "heroic fantasy," as I have defined it, it stops being a "heroic fantasy," and it must be judged by more rigorous standards. I am sure that if Lloyd Alexander had written a conventional heroic fantasy in his Prydain series, I would be no more than mildly annoyed with his books; it is because he tried to hedge his bets—by appealing to those people who enjoy books of the Howard Burroughs variety and feel a little ashamed of it—that his books are so obnoxious to me.



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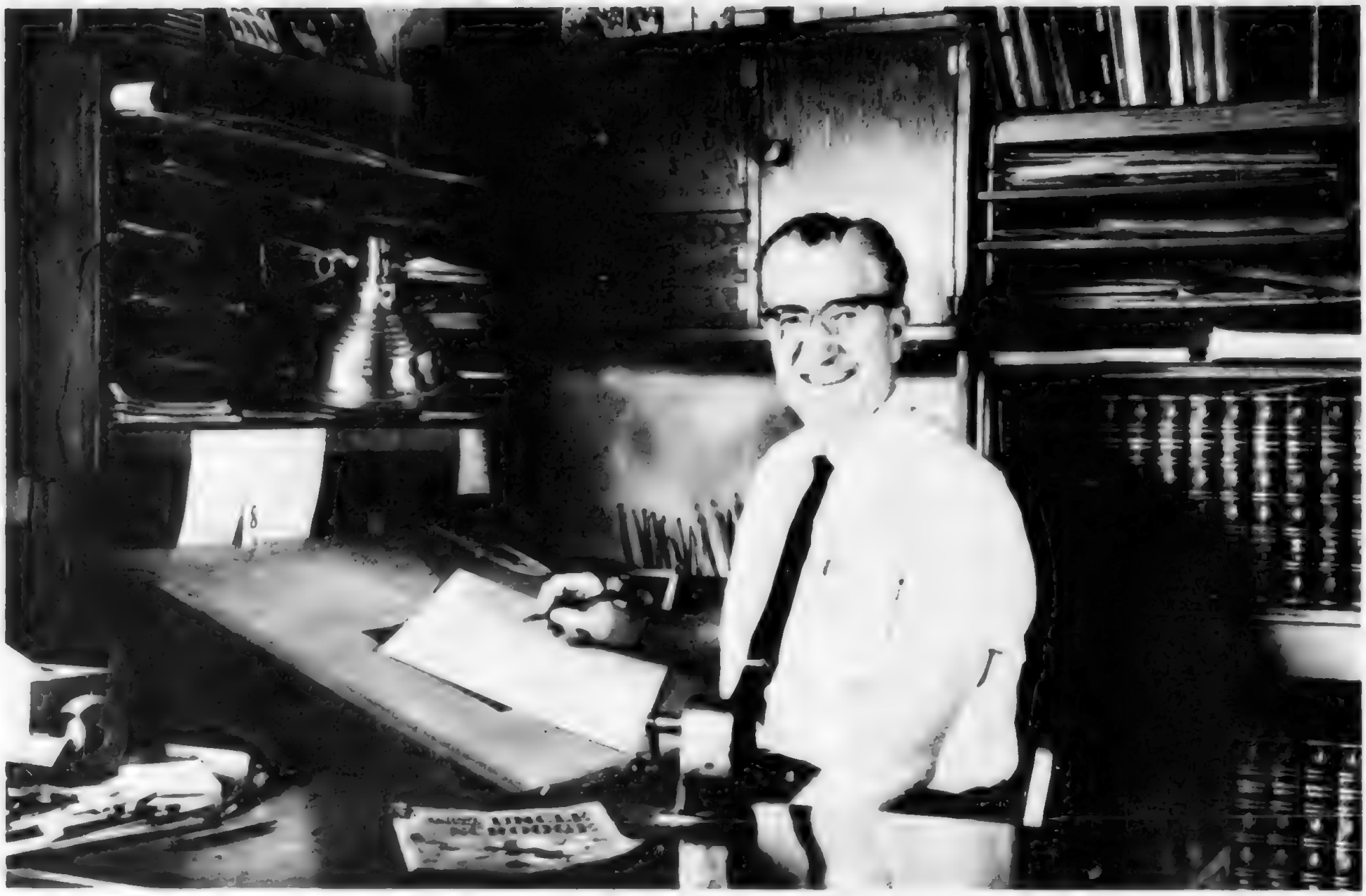

Carl Barks at his drawing board, in a photo that was probably taken late in 1962.

Starting Out in the Comics

Carl Barks Becomes 'The Duck Man'

By MIKE BARRIER

This is an excerpt from Carl Barks and the Art of the Comic Book, *to be published soon as a* Funnyworld *book. Another excerpt, published in* Funnyworld *No. 21, told of Barks's work at the Walt Disney studio in the late thirties and early forties. As this excerpt begins, Barks has just left the studio and approached Western Publishing Company, publisher of the Disney comic books, about doing comics work for them.*

Barks had actually done his first comic-book work for Western while still a Disney employee, by illustrating half of a comic book based on an uncompleted Disney feature cartoon, *Morgan's Ghost*. *Morgan's Ghost* was to have starred Mickey, Donald and Goofy, sailing to a treasure island aboard a ship manned by the disguised Pegleg Pete and his henchmen. Mickey, Donald, and Goofy would have been led to the island by a parrot named Yellowbeak.

Morgan's Ghost would not have been the first feature to star characters from the Disney shorts. It would have followed *Mickey and the Beanstalk*, on which production was already under way in 1941. These features, and *The Wind in the Willows* (also in production in 1941), would have been modest, low-budget efforts, along the lines of *Dumbo*. The hope was that they would regain some of the financial ground that the Disney studio had lost through the expensive boxoffice failures of *Pinocchio* and *Fantasia*.

From Donald Duck *Four Color No. 9, 1942.*

© 1942 Walt Disney Productions

It seems clear that Walt Disney chafed under the budget restrictions that had been imposed on him by the banks, and *Mickey and the Beanstalk*, *Wind in the Willows, and Morgan's Ghost* all were shelved as the studio converted to war production. *Mickey and the Beanstalk* and *The Wind in the Willows* turned up in postwar compilation features (*Fun and Fancy Free* and *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, respectively), but *Morgan's Ghost* exists only as story sketches in the Disney Archives—and as a comic book, *Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold*, Four Color No. 9, published in 1942.

Barks recalled in a 1967 letter that he "got involved in the comic book by being one of two artists who volunteered to do the drawings in spare time." The other was Jack Hannah, Barks's partner in the story department, who said in 1976 that he had not even been aware that the comic book was based on an unmade feature. "Carl and I were given a typed copy of the story," he said. "I think it was broken into panels. That's all that I worked from. Carl and I took it to our respective homes; we took thirty-two pages apiece, and got together on hookups... To my recollection, I never saw a sketch of any kind on the thing; I just worked from typewritten pages."

Some of the comic book's panels are in fact strikingly similar to some of the story sketches—except that Donald's nephews have been substituted for Mickey Mouse and Goofy.

"The story adaptation was done by Bob Karp, who was then...the gagman for the Donald Duck daily and Sunday newspaper strips," Barks said in 1967. "Most credit for the

story should go to Homer Brightman, who plotted it and gagged it up in its original storyboard form for the movie." Barks remembers attending story conferences on *Morgan's Ghost*, but otherwise he did not contribute to it.

Despite this toe-dipping in comic-book work, Barks had no assurance, when he left the studio, that more would be coming his way. "I took a big gamble. I hoped that I could get on with Western Publishing, doing those familiar ducks. Otherwise, I was going to be stuck with having to develop something for myself and see if I could sell it" to some other publisher. He had not started work on any strips of his own before he was asked to illustrate a ten-page Donald Duck story for the April 1943 issue of *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*.

Walt Disney's Comics had begun publication in 1940, taking up where the monthly *Mickey Mouse Magazine* (originally a rowdier version of children's magazines like *Jack and Jill* and *St. Nicholas*) had left off. Reprints of Disney newspaper strips had crept into the *Magazine* in the late thirties, and they had grown in number as Superman and his progeny drove the old-line children's magazines to the wall.

Donald Duck
by WALT DISNEY
WE'LL MAKE OUR OWN VICTORY GARDEN, BOYS!
I'LL MAKE THE HOLES AND YOU PUT IN THE SEEDS!
WHICH WAY DO WE PUT 'EM IN, UNCA DONALD?
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO PUT IN SEEDS — AND THAT'S ANY WAY!
(HA HA BROTHERS' DINNER IS SERVED!)
(COME ON, BOYS, LET'S EAT!)

1943 Walt Disney Productions

From Barks's first "Donald Duck" story in Walt Disney's Comics, *in No. 31, April 1943.*

The last few issues of the *Mickey Mouse Magazine* were full of reprints, and finally the inevitable change was made. *Mickey Mouse Magazine* died with the September 1940 issue, and *Walt Disney's Comics*, made up entirely of comic-strip reprints, was born the next month. For the next two and a half years, *Walt Disney's Comics* contained almost nothing but reprints—so many, in fact, that some strips had been reprinted two or three times by 1943. The ten-page Donald Duck stories were the first break in the all-reprint pattern, although original stories about Bucky Bug, Li'l Bad Wolf, Mickey Mouse, Grandma Duck, and other Disney characters eventually all but crowded out the reprints.

Barks has recalled that the script for that first Donald story—in which Donald defends his Victory Garden from crows—was sent to him by Western, which was then dealing with its artists under the name of one of its subsidiaries, Whitman, while publishing *Walt Disney's Comics* through another affiliate, K.K. Publications. However, the script may have been sent to him directly from the Disney studio. Western's Los Angeles office was a fledgling in 1942 (its first comic book had been published only the year before), and its ties with the Hollywood cartoon studios were close. There is in the Disney Archives an undated note to Barks from the Disney studio, signed "Dorothy" (probably Dorothy Strebe, who worked in the Disney publications department for more than twenty years), that reads in part as follows:

"Here is a 10-page story for Donald Duck. Hope that you like it...you are to stage it, of course...and if you see that it can be strengthened, or that it deviates from Donald either in narration or action, please make the improvements." Barks's pay was specified as twelve dollars and fifty cents per page.

Since Barks began writing his own stories starting with the May 1943 *Walt Disney's Comics*, it seems likely that this note acompanied the script for the story in the April 1943 issue. In any event, Barks did make changes in the story, and the results were satisfactory to Western. Throughout his nearly twenty-four years with Western, his singularity as a comics writer was recognized by his editors; he rarely submitted story ideas in advance.

Barks does recall submitting "a sort of script" for "The Mummy's Ring" (1943), the principal story in the first issue of *Donald Duck* that he both wrote and illustrated.

"I don't remember how detailed a thing it was, but I believe I kind of roughed out the drawings and sent the sheets in, or took the sheets in, and left them there. Eleanor Packer was editor, and she was also quite a story woman herself. She read through what I had planned for the sequence where the Egyptians were all in the temple, and they were arguing as to what to do with this mummy, and so on, and I remember that she suggested some big changes, and she asked me to draw up these changes. Well, I did, and I think I sent the roughs of those changes back. She looked them over, and sent back word to go ahead with my original version, [because] my original version was better. After that, I never had any trouble."

Fortunately for him, and for his readers, Barks had begun working for Western when comic books were still new,

CALIFORNIA OFFICE—SEATED, L. TO R.: *Michael H. Arens, Carl Buettner, J. Alfred Riley. Jane Werner Watson, Alice N. Cobb, Albert L. Stoffel, Thomas McKimson.*
STANDING, L. TO R.: *Ralph Heimdahl, Chase Craig, Francis J. Hoffman, A. L. Zerbe, John N. Carey, Guy Erne, Carl Barks, R. S. Callender.*

This photograph of Carl Barks and other members of Western Publishing's California staff appeared in the company's annual report for 1957. Of the other people in the photo, R.S. Callender was a vice president of Western and head of the West Coast Division; Albert L. Stoffel was Callender's assistant; Chase Craig and Alice N. Cobb were comic-book editors; Thomas McKimson supervised the Whitman books; Carl Buettner supervised the Golden Books; Michael H. Arens and John N. Carey were comic-book artists; and Ralph Heimdahl was the artist for the Bugs Bunny newspaper strip. Most of the other people in the photo were members of the sales staff.

innovations were still possible, and taboos were not oppressive. Ten years later, many of Western's comic books would look, and read, like the work of prissy, humorless robots, but by then, Barks's status as (in the words of Charles Beaumont) "the Dalai Lama of scriptsters" was secure. He suffered from the changed climate, but for the most part indirectly; he never had to endure the indignity of clearing his ideas with the office.

He did have to endure an indignity of another kind in the forties, however. Roger Armstrong, who wrote and illustrated many stories for Western then, described the "showings" at Western's offices in a 1967 letter:

"My recollections of Carl Barks go back to the days when I was barely out of my teens and landed my first honest-to-god comic strip (book) job with what was then the Whitman Publishing Company. In those days there was a ritual in the Beverly Hills office, to which we all wended our ways with our assorted bundles of 'Porky Pigs,' 'Sniffles and Mary Janes,' etc., etc., ad nauseum—a ritual which I am convinced was nothing less than a refinement of the worst excesses of Torquemada at the height of the Spanish Inquisition! This ritual was called 'The Showing'—a harmless enough title on the face of it, but fraught with such agonies for the victim that my mind boggles at the mere recollection of it. The ritual consisted of the hapless cartoonist being taken to the inner office, the sanctum sanctorum of the Big Boss, a hard-driving lady named Eleanor Packer. She would plump herself down in a great soft chair in front of a large board of directors-type table. All the other people who were in the outer offices—secretaries, clerks, flunkies of all sorts and, most horrible of all, any fellow cartoonists who happened to be in the office, bringing in their stuff—were all summoned and grouped about the table. Then the art editor, a fellow with a waspish tongue (and a helluva fine cartoonist) named Carl Buettner (since deceased, God rest his soul) would read—*read out loud*, mind you—the material spread out there on the table,

Roger Armstrong in late 1941 or early 1942, working on "Mary Jane and Sniffles" for Looney Tunes *No. 8.*

that miserable extension of yourself that you had labored over for weeks, and all and sundry were invited to comment, look for mistakes, offensive dialogue, errors in punctuation, unclear drawing, anything, in short, that would confuse a five-year-old child. I will say *one* thing for the device: after a short apprenticeship at that outfit, there wasn't any comic book outfit, syndicate, etc., one could go to work where you wouldn't be the shining light of draughtsmanship, and one ended up an expert on the (written) English language. I honestly owe the great strides my drawing took in those days to 'the showing.' But it was no fun while it was going on!

"All this preamble to get to Carl Barks. Any of us fortunate enough to be on tap in the office on those days when Carl and his wife made the trip in form from faroff Hemet (where he had a chicken farm) bringing in the latest episode of the saga of the Ducks, we would get in on 'the showing.' Needless to say, for Carl, it was nothing but cheers all the way through. He would stand, a painfully shy figure, in the background while the ritual proceeded. I'm convinced he turned his hearing aid off."*

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* Chase Craig, a writer for Western in the forties and later a comic-book editor for the company, said in a 1978 letter: "I do beg to differ with Roger Armstrong in his saying that Carl was embarrassed by Carl Buettner's reading of Carl's stories orally at our office. We all went into hysterics with laughter, and such appreciation of his work certainly could do nothing but give him a lift. Carl loves recognition of his talent as much as anyone I've ever met, and that's exactly what he got every time he ever came to the office. In fact, it was a great day when Carl came in once a month to deliver his work. We all had lunch together and sort of celebrated the occasion. I repeat, he was not embarrassed by his reception. He loved it."

Barks himself said in 1978 that he had enjoyed the warm response to his work—"Like an actor on the stage, I like to see a little appreciation of my punch lines"—but he was glad when the "showings" stopped. "I think the reason for it was that Eleanor Packer and Buettner and those people were new at their business of editing comic books, and they felt that the best way to see how comic-book stories were put together was to read them out loud. If they would read well, as you read them out loud, they would read well to the children."

Hemet, which Armstrong mentioned in his letter, is a town near San Jacinto; Barks lived at various houses in the Hemet-San Jacinto area during his almost thirty years there.

The "showings" ended when Eleanor Packer left Western in 1946. Barks's visits to Western's offices dwindled, and he worked thereafter mostly through the mail.

The stories that excited so much admiration in Western's offices in the mid-forties were, in fact, superior to most of what was being published in Western's comic books then, even though the general level of the artwork and writing in those comics was higher than it has ever been since. The comic books turned out by Western's New York office were, overall, the best; Walt Kelly, John Stanley, Morris Gollub, and Dan Noonan were doing remarkable work, under the benevolent supervision of Oskar Lebeck, for such titles as *Animal Comics* and *Little Lulu*. The Los Angeles office was responsible mainly for the comic books with animated characters (the Disney comic books and *Looney Tunes*, for example). It had its share of good artists and writers—Buettner, Armstrong, Chase Craig, Tom McKimson—but Barks was clearly the class of the group.

Barks's years as a Disney story man show up strongly in his early stories. In discussing his years with Disney, Barks said, "I would say the key was, you have to have a reason for everything. If you could find a reason for something, you could drag anything in. I think that was what I got out of my Disney training more than anything, to analyze whether something was *necessary* to a story."

Barks's early stories in *Walt Disney's Comics* were solidly, logically constructed; in this respect, they were like miniature Disney cartoons. They were filled with "plot gags," one leading to another without any dawdling. The gags were sometimes brilliant, sometimes weak, but they rarely seemed careless or contrived. But even when the gags were brilliant, there was something lacking. The ten-page stories in *Walt Disney's Comics* were not only like miniature cartoons, they were like skeletal cartoons. The characters' personalities were only sketched in: Donald and his three nephews, Huey, Dewey, and Louie, were stereotyped as adversaries, and little more.

Barks set the pattern in his first story. Donald derides the nephews for buying a lucky rabbit's foot, then changes his mind as they have good luck and he has bad. Finally, Donald "borrows" the rabbit's foot so that he can subdue an escaped gorilla and collect adulatory headlines. The rabbit's foot works only for its true owners, of course, and in due time Donald is in a hospital bed.

Barks's stories in the next four or five years were usually cast in this mold—conflict between Donald and the nephews. The nephews, rather passive at first, became steadily more belligerent over the years. They were Donald's competitors as kite builders, wire walkers, swimmers, skaters, and skiers, among other things, besides fighting with him over more normal parent-child problems.

Barks seems to have approached the panels of his early stories almost as if they were storyboard sketches. His basic working methods were always the same: "First, just jotting down a bunch of gags that would come to my mind. Then, I would start hooking the gags together, and pretty soon I'd have a little synopsis. From that, I'd break it down into a longer synopsis, and make a mark every two or three lines and think, 'Well, that will make one page.' By the time I'd get to the bottom of my synopsis I'd know whether I was going to have enough material." Working from such a synopsis, Barks would write a complete script. Then he would rough his drawings in, in pencil, adding many of the details in the inking. A finished page would measure about sixteen inches by twenty-three inches, roughly two and a half times the dimensions of the artwork as printed.

Barks said in 1976, at the "Newcon" comics convention in Boston, that he "tried to end each page, especially toward the latter part of the story, with a little zinger that would carry the reader forward... Sometimes the story would not lend itself to that kind of presentation, but that's the way we learned to do it at the Disney studios working on the short subjects. There had to be a little climax just about every few seconds on the screen, so that's the way I tried to write the duck stories."

At the beginning, he bought what was, in effect, a large bulletin board (he remembers that it was four feet by eight feet), "and when I'd get a half sheet or a comic page done in pencil, I'd stick it up there, and then the next one, and the next one, and after I got about five of them done, I would sit back and look at the display and read the continuity. Sometimes I would take down two or three sheets and do a lot of erasing and changing. I was able to visualize my story progress much better that way." For the first year, too, Barks was working with six-panel pages, so that there were fewer and larger panels in a story; it was thus more natural to tell a highly visual story, through sketches that echoed the story sketches for an animated cartoon.

However, the sketches on a storyboard are not really comparable to the panels in a comic strip or a comic-book story. For one thing, the sketches are not meant to stand by themselves. Disney story men typically would "act out" their stories while pointing to the drawings, and they could provide a continuity that might not be apparent from the drawings alone. The story sketches, after all, were only a starting point—the raw material from which directors, layout men, artists, and animators would fashion a film. They were not meant to stand on their own, as a comic strip's panels must.

Beyond that, stories that are well suited to animation may not work well in comics form, for reasons that Barks discussed when I talked with him in 1973: "You could draw just so much violent action in a comic book before it began to get tiresome. I think Floyd Gottfredson [artist for the Mickey Mouse newspaper strip] put his finger on it one time when I was talking to him, sometime in the nineteen-forties. I'd gone to the studio for something. He said, 'In the strip, the reader can hold it up, and he looks at it for a long, long time, but when it's on the screen, he sees it for a twenty-fourth of a second, and it's gone.' There's no chance for him to look at it too long. I remembered what he had told me, and I toned down my action a little bit after having talked with him."

Barks's early stories were filled with panels that looked like frozen bits of violent action—like story sketches, or even frames of film. But the panels in a good comics story have got to "breathe"—they have to embrace more *time* than a frame

of film does—or else the story can't flow. The continuity from panel to panel is interrupted, and it is this, more than the violence of the action, or anything else, that is truly tiresome.

As the forties wore on, Barks took this increasingly into account. He began dealing with his panels as if they were scenes in a motion picture—individual shots, each encompassing as much time as required to get its point across. His stories developed a much more supple and ingratiating rhythm than his earliest stories had had. He did this not only by toning down the action in his stories, but by bringing the dialogue and the drawings into better balance.

He preserved this balance even when the temptation to do otherwise must have been severe. To jump ahead a bit: in 1947, Barks began using spectacular half-page panels in some of his stories. The first of these was in a story in *Donald Duck* called "Ghost of the Grotto." In this story, the ducks are trying to rout a giant octopus that is lurking in the ruined hulk of an old galleon, and they feed him a chunk of meat wrapped around a heavy dose of chili pepper. The octopus eats the meat and then, in that wonderful half-page panel, rises straight up in the air, stunned, shattering the galleon, as the ducks watch. Barks could have settled for the drawing alone, but instead he gave a bit of dialogue to the nephew who seasoned the bait: "Uh oh! I musta used a sprinkle too much pepper!" It's a funny line that is funnier because of its understatement, and the contrast makes the *drawing* funnier, too. What could have been a spectacular and amusing drawing—and little more—without the dialogue has become instead an integral part of the story, because Barks has asserted the importance of the dialogue. The weight assigned to art or dialogue shifts from panel to panel—in this story and in all the rest—but the basic balance is rarely disturbed.

This new technical mastery wouldn't have counted for much, though, if Barks hadn't used it to tell more interesting stories than his maiden efforts in *Walt Disney's Comics*. Fortunately, he did—but not so much in *Walt Disney's Comics* as in the *Donald Duck* one-shots of the early and middle forties. It was in these comic books that the ducks first came alive as personalities.

The first few issues of *Donald Duck*, like the early issues of other Disney comics, were made up of comic-strip reprints. *Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold* broke that pattern, and the following issues contained all new material. These "one-shots" were published irregularly, at intervals of a year or more, until the late forties. They were published more frequently after that, finally appearing on a bi-monthly schedule in the early fifties. Through 1952, most of them were written and illustrated by Carl Barks.

Most of the important stories in the one-shots ranged from twenty to thirty pages in length. Oddly, few of them resembled the ten-page stories in *Walt Disney's Comics*. Most of these longer stories were less comedies than adventures, building from gag-filled opening pages to quite "straight" adventure passages, and easing again into comedy at the close. They departed from the animated-cartoon format of the short stories in another, more significant way. The ten-page stories centered on the parent-child relationship, but only in terms of parents and children fighting *with* one another. The longer stories, by contrast, emphasized parents and children fighting *for* one another.

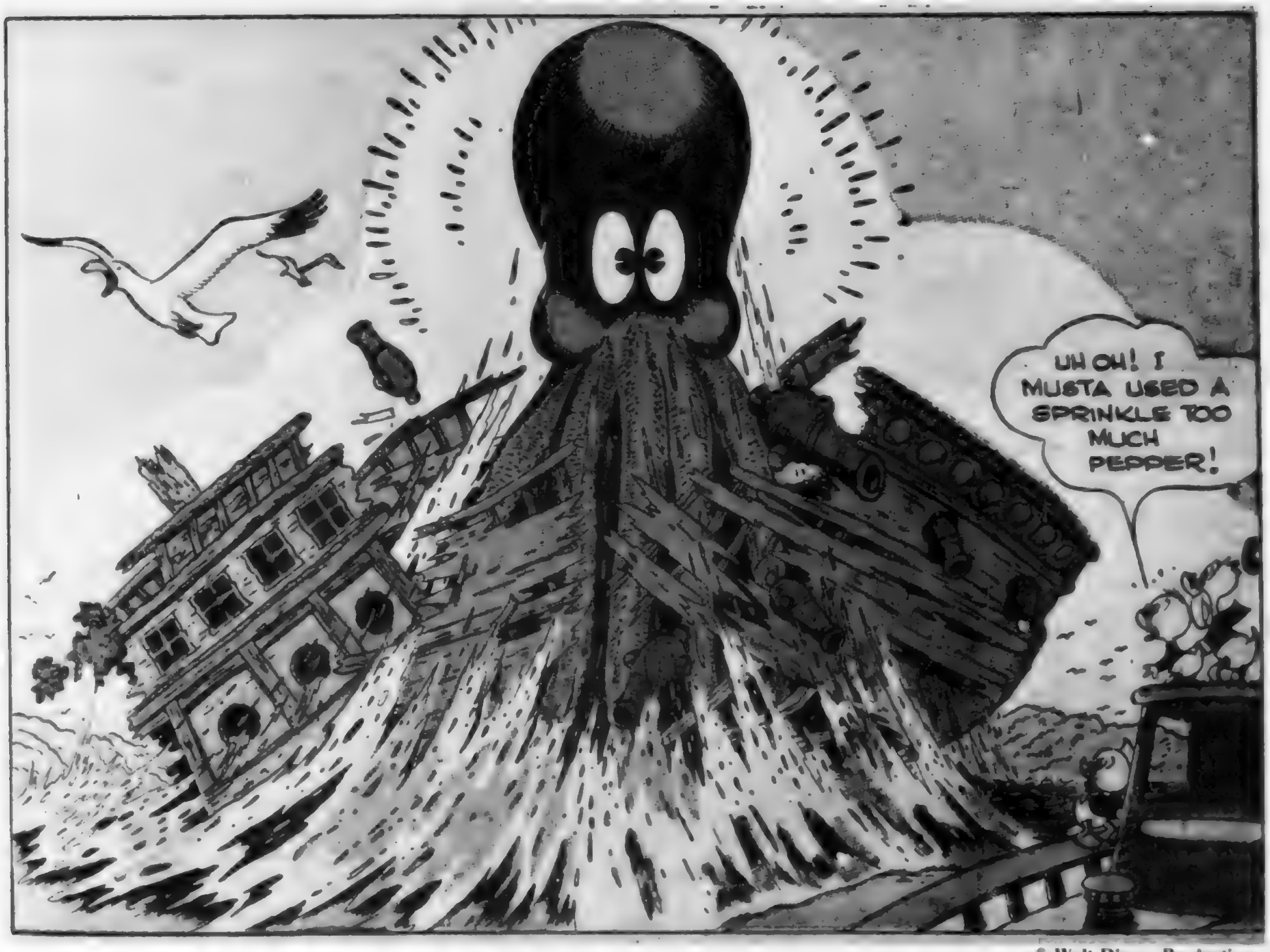
This theme dominates "The Mummy's Ring" (1943), in the first *Donald Duck* one-shot that Barks both wrote and illustrated, just as conflict dominates the first ten-page story. "The Mummy's Ring" is a story in which Donald crosses the Atlantic and faces death to save Huey after the nephew is clapped in a mummy case by a cornered crook and then taken to Egypt by the emissaries of the Bey El Dagga. The Bey is determined to revive the glory of ancient Egypt, and in the process almost re-buries the mummy case with Huey in it before Donald can stop him.

There's another rescue in "Frozen Gold" (1944) but this time the nephews rescue Donald when he is stranded on the Alaskan barrens. To make the rescue, the nephews pick locks, pilot a plane, and finally snag Donald with a parachute as he plunges over a cliff with a polar bear hot on his heels.

It is the next one-shot that contains Barks's finest story of this type ("The Terror of the River," 1946), the one that shows most clearly what he was doing.

In this story, Donald steps into an auction house to escape the cold, and his sneezes are taken for bids on a houseboat tied to a pier in Floodout, Ohio. After protesting, Donald leaves the auction house with a black eye and the deed to the houseboat.

Barks lived and worked in this house in San Jacinto, California, until 1951.



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From "The Ghost of the Grotto" in Donald Duck *Four Color No. 159, 1947.*

The next few pages are filled with the ducks' misadventures as they learn that running a houseboat involves more than watching moonlight on glassy water. Abruptly, a huge, yellow-eyed sea serpent appears. One of the nephews hurls a harpoon at the monster, and a piece of rubber sticks to the point—the sea serpent is a fake. Donald follows the serpent's bubble trail in a folding dinghy, and the serpent promptly swallows him and the dinghy whole. The nephews quickly rent a tugboat and pursue the serpent downriver.

In the serpent's control room, Donald is tied to a pipe, and the serpent's master is chuckling over the panic he has created all up and down the river. "There they go to spread the alarm," he gloats as one steamer flees the serpent. "Before night my little plaything will be known as the terror of the river. Haw! Trembling sheriffs will toss dynamite in the water! Jittery people will hunt the serpent with shotguns! Haw! But I won't be here. I'll be miles down the river, scaring more steamer crews with my terrifying invention."

"But why?" Donald asks. "Why all this scaring?"

"Why do people dance?" the "scarer" replies smugly. "Because they like to. It amuses them. I like to scare people."

He tells Donald that when he is through scaring, he will bury his serpent submarine in a mud bank and leave through an escape hatch. "Then I'll spend the rest of my life laughing at people's wild stories of the 'sea serpent' that thousands saw but nobody ever found."

"But what about me?" Donald asks anxiously.

The "scarer's" eyes narrow, his mouth twists into a sadistic grin, he hunches forward in his seat and jabs his finger at Donald. "You?...Oh, you'll stay in the buried submarine, where the secret of how I scared herds of people to death will be safe in your keeping—*forever*."

Not a nice fellow. By this point, comedy has all but vanished from this story.

Finally, in the Mississippi Delta, the nephews lure the serpent with a decoy—a wrecked steamer that they push along with their tug to make it look like the real thing. The nephews rope the serpent's head, and then begin a deadly tug of war with the sub. The rope breaks the serpent's throat valve and, as water rushes into the submarine, the "scarer" collapses into quivering jelly. In desperation, he frees Donald, who stops the sub and lays out the "scarer" with a wrench.

The nephews hear someone crawling up the serpent's throat, and stand with clubs at the ready. Then Donald emerges, crying, "Howdy, *men*!"

INSIDE THE SUB!
HAW! HAW! HAW!
WHAT'S SO DOGGONE FUNNY, SNAKE EYES?
IT WORKS! IT WORKS! MY FAKE SERPENT SCARED THAT STEAMER CREW OUT OF THEIR SKINS!....HAW!
THERE THEY GO TO SPREAD THE ALARM! BEFORE NIGHT MY LITTLE PLAYTHING WILL BE KNOWN AS THE TERROR OF THE RIVER!... HAW!
TREMBLING SHERIFFS WILL TOSS DYNAMITE IN THE WATER! JITTERY PEOPLE WILL HUNT THE "SERPENT" WITH SHOT-GUNS! HAW!
BUT I WON'T BE HERE! I'LL BE MILES DOWN THE RIVER, SCARING MORE STEAMER CREWS WITH MY TERRIFYING INVENTION! HAW!
BUT WHY?? WHY ALL THIS SCARING?
WHY?..WHY DO PEOPLE DANCE? BECAUSE THEY LIKE TO! IT AMUSES THEM!... I LIKE TO SCARE PEOPLE!
SOUNDS SILLY TO ME!
AND AFTER I'VE SCARED EVERYBODY OFF THE RIVER, I'LL BORE THIS SUB INTO A MUD BANK AND GO OUT THE ESCAPE HATCH!
BORING INTO MUD
THEN I'LL SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE LAUGHING AT PEOPLE'S WILD STORIES OF THE "SEA SERPENT" THAT THOUSANDS SAW, BUT NOBODY EVER FOUND!
HAW!
WHAT ABOUT ME?
YOU?...OH, YOU'LL STAY IN THE BURIED SUBMARINE, WHERE THE SECRET OF HOW I SCARED HERDS OF PEOPLE TO DEATH WILL BE SAFE IN YOUR KEEPING— FOREVER!

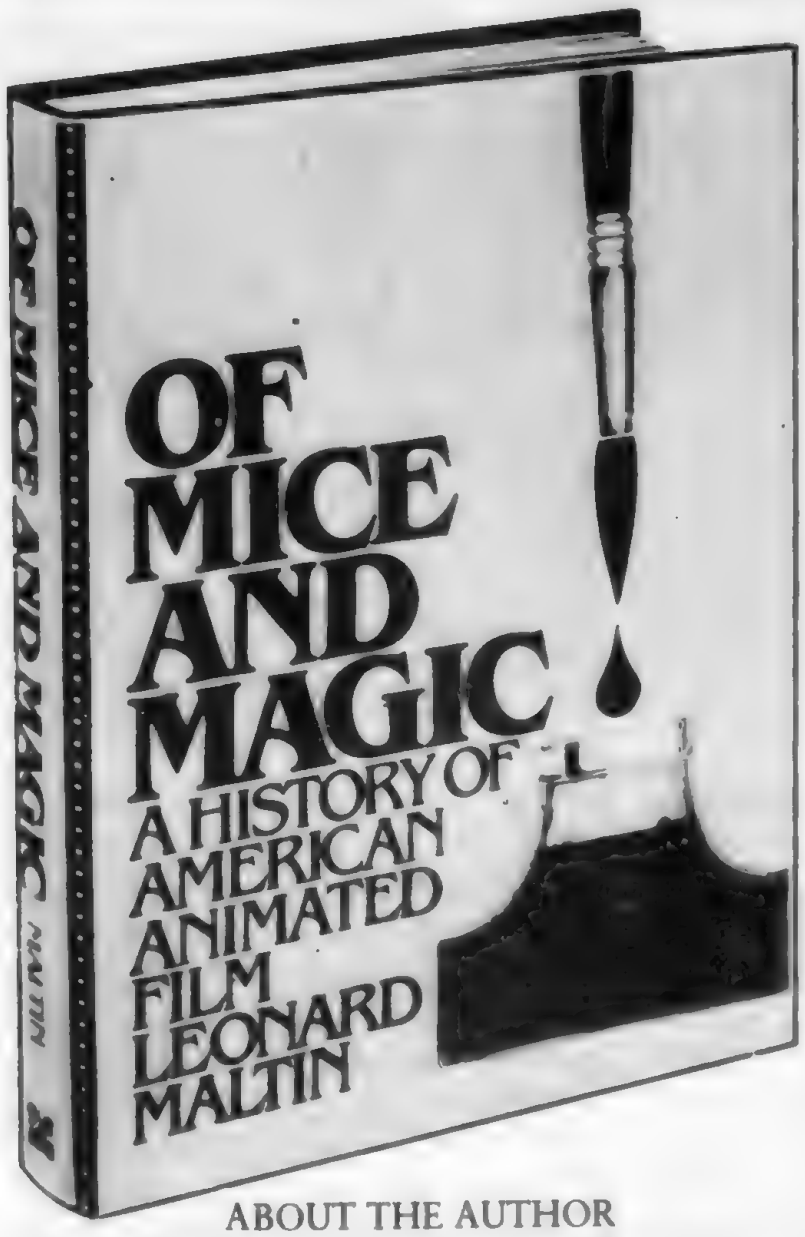
From "The Terror of the River" in Donald Duck *Four Color No. 108, 1946.*

© Walt Disney Productions

The ten-page stories had a basic appeal to children, because the nephews warred openly with Donald and got away with it. The child reader could identify with the nephews because they worked out their conflicts with their parent in a direct and satisfying manner, something most children could never do. Huey, Dewey, and Louie were nephews, of course, and not Donald's sons, but this was merely a concession to respectability.

Jejune wish-fulfillment was the stock in trade of the early comic books—the stories often seemed to have been written and drawn by talented children—and Barks's ten-page stories were separated from the competition mainly by his superior craftsmanship. He did well what many other artists and writers did poorly. Stories like "The Terror of the River" were a different matter entirely. In these stories, the children turned their skills and resourcefulness not to defeating the parent, but to saving his life, and, in so doing, proved that they were indeed "men"—that is, mature and responsible. Huey, Dewey, and Louie won my admiration—and that of many other children of my generation—not because they were rebellious children, but because they were adult, in ways that mattered. They were paragons of courage, competence, and good sense, qualities that were most clearly visible when they were rescuing Donald from some folly. Probably this "rescue" theme had a gut appeal for children that has never been equalled in comic books.

If Barks's stories had simply remained on this level, he would be entitled to our respect. It is because his stories got so much better that he deserves not only to be respected, but to be read.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leonard Maltin is a widely respected film historian, having written eight books and edited seventeen others including *TV MOVIES*. He has taught the history of animated cartoons at the New School for Social Research in New York City since 1973.

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HUEMERESQUE

a column by Dick Huemer

The Battle of Washington

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From The New Spirit.

Almost immediately after the outbreak of World War II, Walt Disney formed a liasion with Henry Morgenthau, Jr., then President Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury, to produce, at the government's expense, a propaganda animated cartoon film to be called *The New Spirit*, ostensibly designed to bolster the morale of the American people—as if *they* needed any bolstering against Hitler and his passel of hoodlums—as well as (if they should happen to get hold of a print) knock the knockwurst out of his arrogant Nasties.

Under Walt's dedicated surveillance, Joe Grant, myself, and others of Walt's myrmidons had in record time prepared a set of storyboards on the above premise. And now, these storyboards had to be taken back to Washington and presented to Mr. Morgenthau, Jr., for his okay.

I broke out in a cold sweat when I learned that *I* was to be included in the group that would be *flying* East to accomplish this. Understand that my apprehension didn't stem from timidity over a face-to-face confrontation with so eminent an official as a cabinet member. No indeed! It was the *flying* aspect of this particular caper that terrified me! You see, I was irrevocably opposed to *ever* becoming airborne, unless I could sprout a pair of wings of my very own. And that, at some vague and *far* distant date, at which time I would also be entitled to free harp lessons, and one of those absurd shiny *things* over my head; which head would be re-endowed with its pristine bushy locks.

Que faire? As the French would have it. Did you or did you not casually mention to Walt, when you accidentally met him on the lot, "Oh, incidentally, boss, it is my well-considered conviction that there is still quite a bit of re-thinking to be done vis-a-vis heavier-than-air transportation. So-o-o-o, if it is all the same to *you*, old boy, I'll just pass on this little junket"? *Not on your granny's moustache cup you didn't!* You went! Without comment! Or moués.

Except for the not *too* obtrusive droning of the DC's engines, it is quiet in the dimly-lit plane. But clearly heard by me is the persistent voice of one of Roy Disney's henchmen, who hunkers beside my aisle seat with his open briefcase, and keeps up a running monologue on studio matters in which I've not the slightest interest, or for that matter, comprehension. He is as brisk and bright as though it was two in the afternoon instead of *three* in the morning. Why is he doing this to *me*? I wonder. Of course! It is my apprehension at being confronted with sudden shattering death at any minute that has only *me* of our group, sitting so upright, and wide-awake staring. Joe Grant is quietly snoozing beside me, and Walt and Roy are behind me. *They* are quite obviously meant to be the real audience for this brownie-point-gathering performance. Apparently they are not asleep, although they are not talking either. Theoretically, they are also listening to the constructive shop talk.

If I could only summon up a yawn or two to deploy in his face! Or if I could suddenly and miraculously cork-off like a goddamn pussycat! And while I am ruminating on escapement devices, he *stops*!

Do I detect a shadow of annoyance on his face? What have I done? Then impatiently—and sloppily—he snaps his briefcase shut over its brimming mess of paperwork, and with a hurried "Night" he oozes back to his seat. Rather odd behavior, think I—wonder what got into *him*? And then I know. From behind me comes, yes, not one, but *two* of the most heaven-sent snores I ever heard, and/or gratefully approved of. I settle down contentedly, and close my eyes for the first time that night. "How comforting!" I think. "The great Walter Elias Disney does not worry. *He* sleeps blissfully—and snores—just like any other ordinary human being! Then what the hell am *I* so scared about?" And soon, the tight grip on the arms of

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The New Spirit *has also been discussed in detail in two earlier issues of* Funnyworld, *No. 17 (in Richard Shale's article on the Disney studio's wartime films) and No. 19 (in a letter from Wilfred Jackson, director of* The New Spirit*).*

my seat slowly relaxes, and gradually I too fall asleep—and probably snore. And when I awake we are dropping thru heavy fog to the Washington airport. Being surrounded outside my window with white opaqueness does not reassure me. But I know I am not quite as worried as before.

Mind you, I have used the designation "Battle of Washington" only in a figurative sense (besides, it's an arresting title) for we history buffs are well aware that, since Confederate General Jubal Early's half-hearted threat to its outer defenses in 1864, and our English cousin's hotfooting of the White House back in 1813, there has been no *real* battle involving our capital city. Nevertheless, Washington's atmosphere in early 1942 was intensely war-oriented. There was an urgency in the air that is now difficult to describe. Everything and everybody seemed to take part in some way with the war's prosecution. Even our cabbie at the airport exuded an air of dedication, and I became suffused with a tingling excitement that rarely left me while I remained in the city.

This excitement was now superseded by the impending more crucial story meeting with Secretary Morgenthau. Ours was not to worry however, for our boards were as classy as usual. And didn't we have the best damned storyboard spieler in the business - Walt Disney himself to present it?

There were only the three of us that day in the Secretary's outer office Walt, Joe, and me. Roy Disney and his men had gone on to other matters, and we didn't see them for the rest of our stay. It seemed to us that it took quite a long time while we awaited the pleasure of the great man in the inner office. Actually, much too long. Could it be that something had gone wrong? There *had* been uncomfortable rumors of Congressional grumbling over wasting money on ours and similar projects. Suddenly, our concern was heightened to the breaking point when Morgenthau's private secretary came out of the room where the boards were set up and waiting, and addressed himself to Walt.

"Would Mr. Disney mind coming in *alone*?"

Of course he wouldn't, and he followed him in, looking a bit puzzled. And Joe and I must have looked a lot crushed. There was only one thing to make of this. The deal was off! Morgenthau was going to wind it up right now! It was back to Burbank with our stupid boards! Suddenly we both hated the childish project. Hell! It was just as well! What good would it have done anyway? And we went on trying to console one another in similar fashion, and time once again seemed to stretch interminably as our fate was being determined inside that office. Meanwhile, also, we had time to evaluate the loss of numerous fringe benefits normally accruing to trips such as this. No Corcoran Gallery for Joe. No Smithsonian for me. None of the other wonders of Washington which neither of us had ever seen, and now might *never* see. Undoubtedly we would be flying back home on the next plane. At least Joe and I would.

And the waiting was protracted, as though to further certify to the debacle. We fell silent and waited for the blow to fall. War sure *was* heck!

And then the door is open! And nothing but joyous noises are issuing from Morgenthau's sanctum! And anon, two happily conversing executives emerge. No doubt about it, the "Whiz of the West" has brought it off!

Walt explained it to us later. Our project never was in danger. It seems that the good Secretary had awakened that morning with a splitting headache, and just couldn't stand the idea of a formal noisy meeting with a lot of people. Even *his* underlings were barred. It was just too bad we had to miss one of the boss's most inspired performances. At any rate, it cured the headache, for Morgenthau appeared just fine when we saw him later to take pictures of the event.

We were unexpectedly invited to dinner at the Morgenthau ménage that evening—informal, of course. When I relive the opening moments of our arrival before the Secretary's home, I see two shadowy forms standing beside the tall stoop, and I am again chilled by the realization of the ever-present danger in which those in high office stood. Twenty-four-hour guards! But a secret sign from our guide and all was well. Too bad Lincoln wasn't guarded that way that fatal night at the Ford Theatre.

Only one thing comes to mind in connection with that delightful informal dinner. It happened at cocktail time (Old Fashioneds). Apropos of what, I can't remember either, but suddenly, Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury of the United States of America, was saying a most astonishing thing!

"What I am about to tell you," sezze, "must under no circumstances leave this room!" And he sucked thoughtfully on the heavy glass muddler of his drink, while we sat breathlessly awaiting his pronouncement (I wondering if muddler licking was some kind of custom in official Washington—and hoping it didn't include tossing the dregs of your drink over your shoulder—glass and all).

With the air of a large eagle being conspiratorial, he then said, "This may come as a surprise to you, but the truth of the matter is that the United States government does not *really* need all that War Bond money it is agitating for! It is only for the purpose of keeping our people from squandering their spare cash, and thus creating artificial shortages in certain commodities, and so possibly adversely affecting the economy." Though none of us were on speaking terms with economics, we all exhibited signs of being vastly impressed—at least *I* did.

One more item involving the good Secretary before we start wrapping it up. Having gotten the okay we had come for, Walt now gave some thought to production of *The New Spirit*. Joe and I had suggested that the short should be produced in what was called the "Baby Weems technique," which is nowadays known as limited animation. It had not been then thought of as a deliberate money saver for that picture, but rather as an effective way to show the reading of a story book on the screen

with pages turning and all.

It so happened (HAW!) that we had brought along a print of the "Baby Weems" episode from *The Reluctant Dragon*, and Walt ran it for Morgenthau, who very gratifyingly laughed at the right places, but had the wrong answer after the showing.

"Very fine," said he, "but Mr. Disney, I think we had better go for the *blue plate special. Real* animation treatment, that is." Not what we had hoped for, but very perceptive of him, we all had to acknowledge.

Well, Congressional doubting notwithstanding—although in light of Secretary Morgenthau's optimistic monetary disclosures, we couldn't imagine what *they* were worried about—Walt Disney's first *squib* of defiance in the faces of the unspeakable Axis was successfully brought off. And this was followed by some real blockbusters, like *Education For Death*, *Reason and Emotion*, and the raucous *Der Fuehrer's Face*.

How effective films such as these were in helping to win the war is perhaps open to question, and that puts me in mind of the last two lines of Southey's famous poem, which is concerned with another war. I quote:

"But what good came of it at last?
Quoth little Peterkin?"

"Why that I cannot tell," said he, "But 'twas a famous victory."

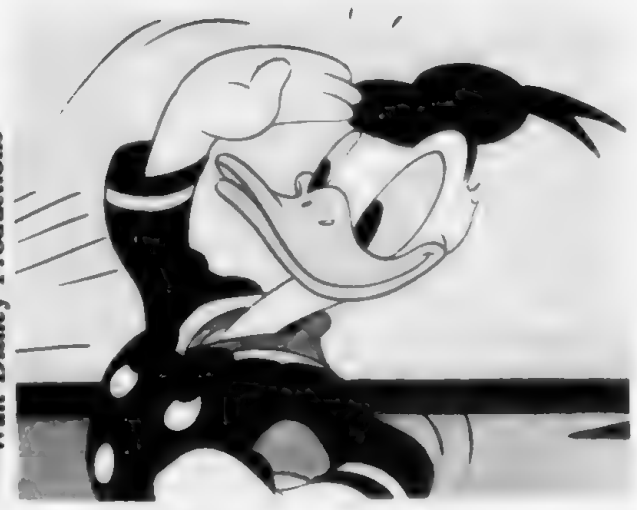
Three earlier issues of Funnyworld *(Nos. 16, 17, and 21) have included extensive excerpts from the interviews that Joe Adamson conducted with Dick Huemer in 1968 and 1969, as part of the American Film Institute/UCLA Oral History Program. The following excerpt could not be accomodated in any of those issues, for lack of space, but it is too enjoyable not to publish it.*

When I went to work for Walt, I was sitting in his sanctum, and we were talking; we were all set, had agreed on how much money and everything. Walt started to tell me that he was going to make a feature cartoon. Mind you now, this was in 1933! He was already thinking of it. Not only that, but it was going to be *Snow White*. He started to tell me a little about the story, how she eats the poison apple and dies, and how as she's lying there all the goddamned little animals are looking in the window with tears rolling down... Walt was such a wonderful actor that my throat started to get tight, and my eyes began to moisten—it was wonderful, the way he was telling it.

The idea of doing a feature was such a brazen, daring idea to begin with, in 1933. Then he told me that he might also some day like to have some kind of an amusement park. You don't have to believe this if you don't want to, but he did! Not an out-and-out amusement park.Not the way it finally turned out, but the idea, the germ, was there. And while we were sitting and talking, in came Charlie Chaplin. I almost fell out of the chair, because after all Charlie Chaplin was one of my idols. And behind him was another one of my idols, H.G. Wells! They came right over and Chaplin very proudly introduced, not Walt to Wells, but Wells to Walt! "Here's somebody I want you to meet, Walt Disney, this great guy sitting here." That was the feeling. It was a wonderful experience; but I don't know what they said because I left soon after.

We once had Frank Lloyd Wright on the lot. We had not yet finished doing "The Nutcracker Suite," but we had enough of it to show, some of the color stuff on a Leica reel. We ran it for him, and we waited for his reaction. And he shook his bushy head and said, "This is *not* it!" He didn't like it. We were stunned! Then he gave Walt a long lecture, he said, "Walt, you have great possibilities. But you should go away somewhere and purify yourself. Then come back and do something wonderful." And here *we* thought we *had* done something wonderful. Maybe we had, I don't know, but he certainly didn't seem to think so. Of course it didn't throw Walt a bit. He didn't care; he knew what he was doing.

Walt also had Aldous Huxley in on *Alice in Wonderland*, the first five meetings, at which I was present. And at which, every time he started to say anything, he never got anywhere, because Walt did all the talking and had all the ideas. Actually, Huxley didn't seem to have any ideas. Not at the



© Walt Disney Productions

From The New Spirit

meetings anyway. He sat there with his one baleful eye (he was kind of blind in one eye, I think), and the only thing I can remember him saying was this: Walt was explaining something about the entrance of somebody, and suddenly Huxley pipes up and says, "Ah, yes, I see that! Hail, the conquering rabbit comes!" Apropos of nothing, Walt just grunted. Then Huxley disappeared. After five meetings or so later we never saw him again. But that's how Walt worked, he was very lavish with material and men. Huxley was well paid for his time, I should think. Walt was always curious about famous people and what they could do. And he thought Huxley might be able to contribute something being an Englishman, and so presumably knowing all about *Alice in Wonderland*, which he probably did. (Actually, he wrote what I thought was an interesting cartoon and live-action treatment, which Walt never used.) Walt always wanted to progress and improve, and draw on the brains of the world, if he could.

He spared no money, no pains to improve the product, ever. He never cut corners, that I can recall. He cut salaries once, during the Depression. Everybody down the line had to take a cut, but we were all willing to do that. It was a community enterprise, you know, we all had a feeling of love for the studio—which I still do. It's a wonderful organization. There's never been anything like it. Probably never will be.

Dick Huemer worked in animation studios for more than fifty years, starting with Mutt and Jeff in 1916. He later was story director for such Disney features as Fantasia *and* Dumbo. *He died November 30, 1979, at the age of 81. His final "Huemeresque" will appear in* Funnyworld *No. 23.*

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Cartoons That Never Were

A Portfolio of Artwork from Unfinished Films

Hollywood animation's history is made up not only of the cartoons that were completed and shown in theaters, but of "cartoons that never were"—films on which work was begun, but which were never finished, for one reason or another. These ghostly films have left their traces through drawings of various kinds—story sketches, character models, and even, in the case of films that actually went into production, layout and animation drawings.

A few drawings from some of these unmade films are reproduced on the following pages.

As might be expected, the Disney studio has taken up and discarded more projects than any other studio—probably more than all the other Hollywood studios put together. There are in the Disney Archives shelves full of sketches for unmade features, such as *Morgan's Ghost* (discussed in the Carl Barks article elsewhere in this issue). Even the unlikeliest literary classics, such as *Don Quixote* or Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha," might be dumped in the laps of Disney story men.

It is never safe to say that a proposed Disney film has been shelved permanently. As John Cawley, Jr., explains in an excellent article in the July 1979 issue of *American Classic Screen*, the story of Reynard the Fox was explored by Disney as early as 1938, and it kept popping up as a candidate for feature treatment over and over again during the next twenty years, finally metamorphosing into a story—*Chanticleer*—in which Reynard played second fiddle to the title character, a rooster. That story was never filmed, but in 1973, in *Robin Hood*, many of the same characters and situations were resurrected. After thirty-five years, Reynard finally had his day.

In the late thirties and early forties, only the short cartoons released by MGM rivaled the Disney cartoons in splendor; the MGM cartoons were made by Hugh Harman and Rudolf Ising, first at their own studio and then as producers on the MGM lot. The MGM budgets, while not as lavish as Disney's, were large enough to permit the occasional scrapping of projects that didn't pan out. In fact, Harman and Ising's association with MGM began in 1934 with the setting aside of *The Nutcracker*, a featurette on which they had started work during the hiatus between the end of their contract with Leon Schlesinger in 1933 and the start of their MGM release.

The artwork that survives from the abandoned MGM cartoons reflects the high quality of the artists that Harman and Ising had at their disposal in those days—Robert Allen, Lee and Mary Blair, Maurice Day, and Martin Provensen, to name only a few. Many of these people worked for the Disney studio later.

These atmospheric sketches by Jesse Marsh (best known as the artist for Dell's Tarzan *comic book) were made at the time the Disney studio was considering a feature version of* Don Quixote.

At other studios, with smaller budgets, it was much rarer for an idea to get very far before it was scrapped, but there were exceptions. At Warner Brothers, for example, Bob Clampett had to abandon a cartoon about President Roosevelt's dog (*For He's a Jolly Good Fala*) in 1945, when Roosevelt died. (Another cartoon with Fala in it, Chuck Jones's *Fresh Airedale*, had to undergo some emergency last-minute revisions to convert Fala into a non-presidential dog.)

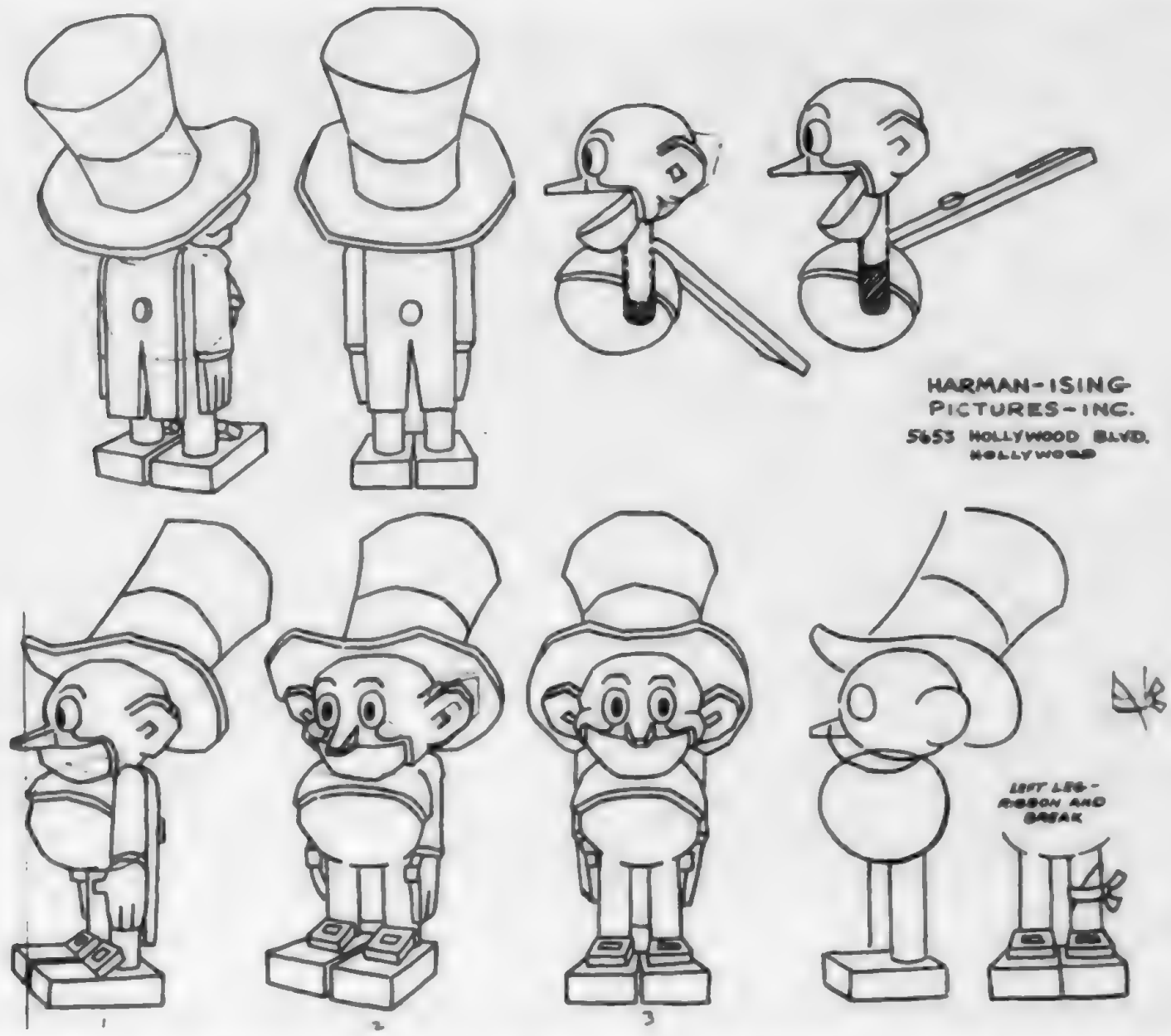
Years later, another Warner director, Friz Freleng, worked with Aurelius Battaglia on story sketches for a modernized version of *Snow White* that would be done to songs telling the story, in the manner of Freleng's *Three Little Bops*. Tallulah Bankhead was to be the Queen, Marilyn Monroe Snow White, Edward G. Robinson the Huntsman, and Frank Sinatra the Prince. Freleng says that this cartoon had to be scrapped because of possible legal complications.

A layout drawing for The American Eagle, *an unfinished Rudolf Ising Production for MGM.*

© MGM

Studies by Robert Allen for the title character in an abandoned M
The Sleepy Groundhog.

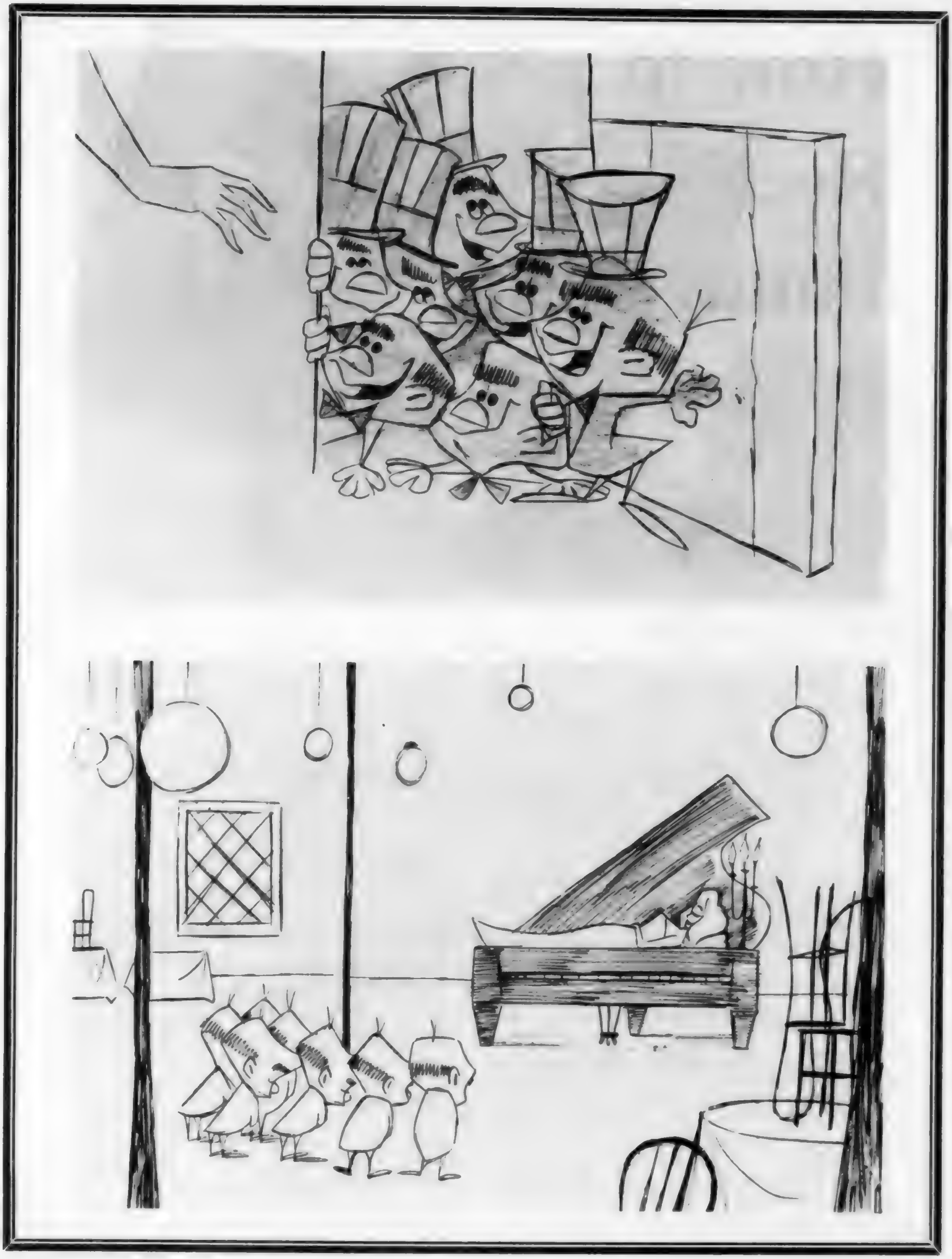
ned MGM cartoon called



A model sheet for a Harman-Ising featurette, The Nutcracker, *which was abandoned when Harman and Ising began making cartoons for MGM in 1934.*

Character sketches for an abandoned MGM cartoon that had the working title "Bear and the Pigs."

Story sketches by Aurelius Battaglia for Fritz Freleng's updated version of Snow White *for Warner Brothers.*



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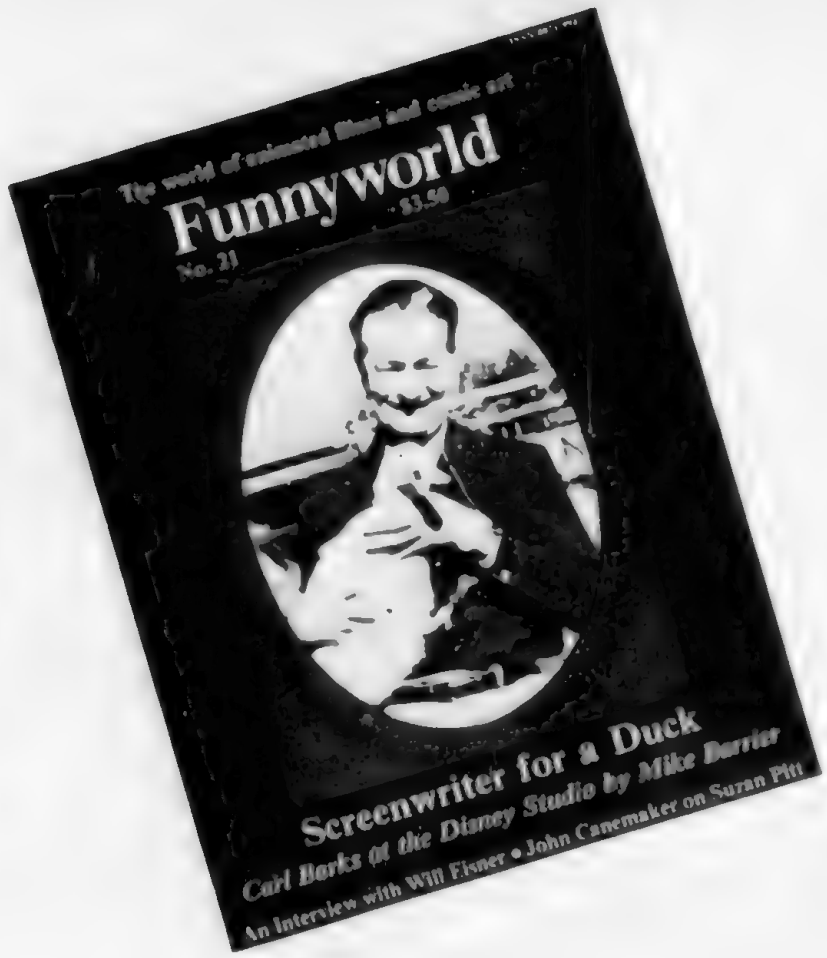
The world of animated films and comic art
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No. 21
Screenwriter for a Duck
Carl Barks at the Disney Studio by Mike Barrier
An Interview with Will Eisner • John Canemaker on Suzan Pitt

Funnyworld started out as a rather informal type of production—it was a mimeographed newsletter for a small group of enthusiasts. As time went on, its format and scope changed, and its circulation went up. Issues #1 through #11 were originally mimeographed, while the others were offset printed. The notes on each issue are only a guide. Most issues include letters and reviews. Issues #1 through #16 are out of print, so we will send you photocopies.

ISSUES 1 THROUGH 5 1941-1966 Warner Bros. Cartoon Comic Book Index; review of **A Sign for Cain** by Frederic Wertham; Roy Rogers visits Little Rock, Arkansas; Funny Animal Quiz; Our Gang Comic Index; other Dell/Gold Key comic indexes; Disney's Death. 60 pages (October 1966 through April 1967).

ISSUES 6 THROUGH 8 These issues are almost totally devoted to the Carl Barks Bibliography. 92 pages (June 1967 through December 1967).

ISSUES #9 AND #10 More Barks material; a speech by Chuck Jones entitled, "Animation, the Naked Art". 99 pages (May 1968 through November 1968).

ISSUE #11 More Barks material. 73 pages (May 1969).

ISSUE #12 Notes on underground comics; interview with Bob Clampett; more Barks material. 50 pages (1970).

ISSUE #13 Interview with Chuck Jones; interview with Carl Stalling; more Barks material; Milt Gray on the impact of computer animation and home video cassettes. 56 pages (1971).

ISSUE #14 The filming of **Fritz the Cat**; reviews of underground comics; I. Klein on his first job at the Hearst studio; Ub Iwerks, 1901-1971, by David Smith; more Barks material. 50 pages (1972).

ISSUE #15 The filming of **Fritz the Cat**, Part II: Katz's Catastrophe by John Fawcett; Tex Avery article, by Joe Adamson; **Heavy Traffic**; more Barks material. 50 pages (1973).

ISSUE #16 More Barks material; Working for the Fleischers—An Interview With Dick Huemer; Underground Comics in Europe. 44 pages (1974).

ISSUE #17 The Disney Studio During WW II: Roy Williams interview; Dick Huemer's work with Disney. 50 pages (1977).

ISSUE #18 Oscar Fischinger, by John Canemaker; column by Dick Huemer; animation voices over the last 50 years; the composers for Disney's shorts, by Ross Care. 54 pages (Summer 1978).

ISSUE #19 Richard Williams Animating Frank Frazetta; Eric Knight at Disney's Studio; reviews of the Ottawa and Filmex festivals; Disney's Kansas City studio, 56 pages (Fall 1978).

ISSUE #20 Fifty years of Disney Animation; Dick Huemer-s column; **The Black Cauldron**; the Charles Mintz studio; George Griffin; Disney's Kingswell and Hyperion studios; reviews of **Lord of the Rings, Watership Down**. 56 pages (Summer 1979).

ISSUE #21 Carl Barks at the Disney Studio, by Mike Barrier; Suzan Pitt, by John Canemaker; Tom Andrae interviews Will Eisner; Jack Kinney's work with Goofy; June Foray and Stephen Bosustow on a world tour; Dick Huemer's column. 48 pages (Fall 1979).

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Tender Balloons:

An Interview With Tom Hachtman

By MAXINE P. FISHER

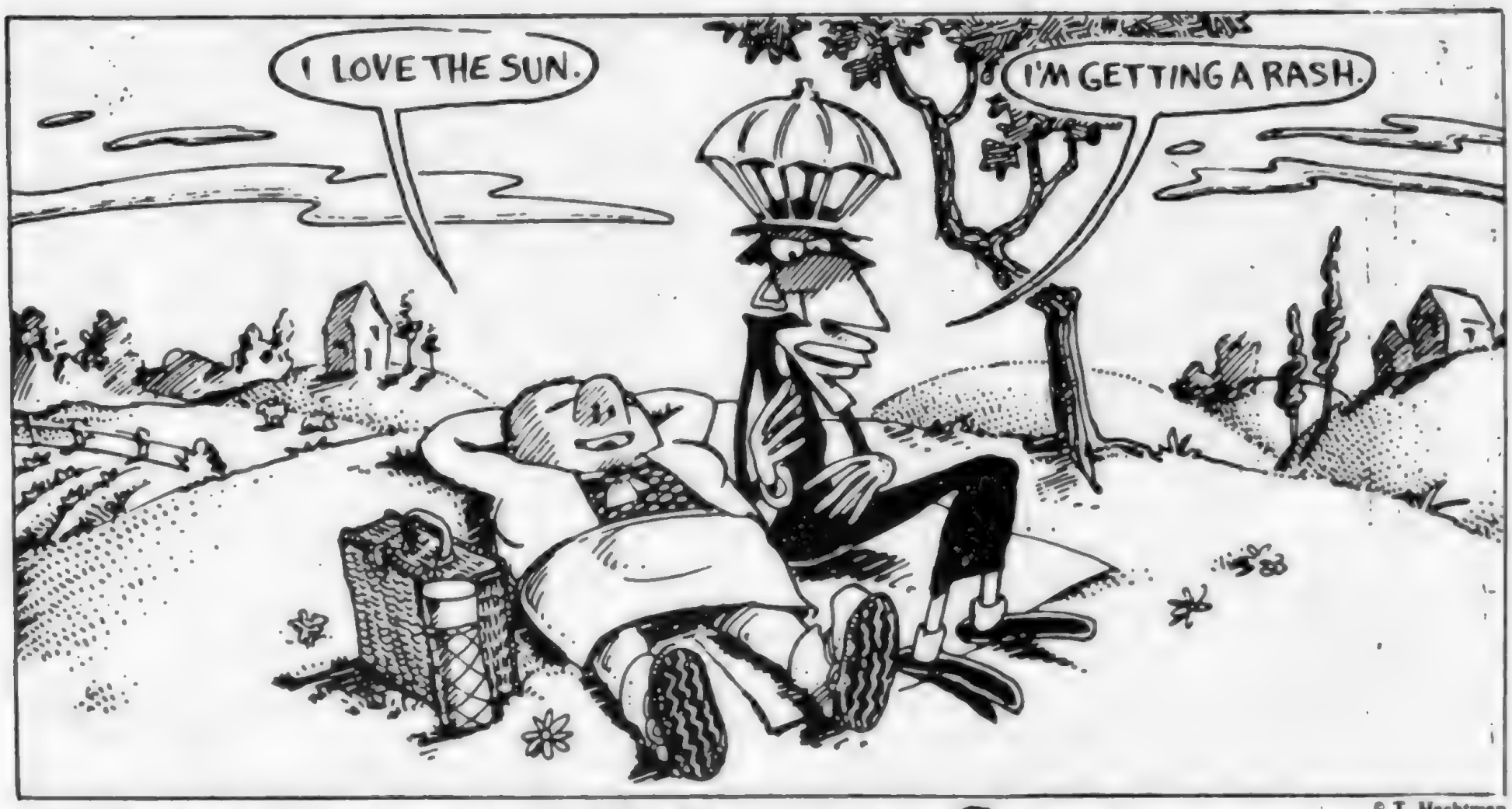
"Who is this T. Hachtman?", I often wondered during the past two and a half years. Thus was signed "Gertrude's Follies", a comic strip which appears in a hebdomadal New York newspaper called THE SOHO NEWS. *It is not quite like any other strip that has ever been. Its creator has resurrected Gertrude Stein and her ever-present lover and companion, Alice, their pet poodle, and all of their friends, including "Pabs" Picasso and "Ernie" Hemingway, then set them loose in the time-warped world of the cartoon. Their adventures on the back page of the paper are a dazzling crazy-quilt combination of things that actually happened to their real-life counterparts in Paris during the early decades of the century and those that take place today in the wild imagination of their creator.*

St. Martin's Press has just published a book entitled GERTRUDE'S FOLLIES. *It is a selected collection of the strips which began to appear in April, 1978. Currently, Tom Hachtman is busy writing a script and doing preliminary drawings for a planned feature-length animated film based on "Gertrude's Follies". The following are excerpts from an interview which took place at the studio where over the past several weeks I've been watching an animated film take on its first foetal shape. Once the interview was interrupted by an idea that streaked across Tom's brain and had to be set down on the storyboard panels right away. You can tell when an idea is coming to him by the great smile it brings forth. And there is much laughter on my tape recording of the interview. Here, as you shall see, is someone who picks up every moment of an ordinary day, shakes it, then turns it upside down to see what might be of hidden interest inside it.*

MF: How did your comic strip "Gertrude's Follies" come into being?

TH: Before "Gertrude", I was doing only illustration work. When you do that, you run around with your portfolio and you get jobs doing covers on paperback books or magazine illustrations. And sometimes they put your name in tiny little type along the side of your illustration. But nobody ever looks at it. Other illustrators look, but I don't think anyone else looks—or cares who did this or that illustration. That was part of it. I wanted to have this thing with my name on it. And every week people would see it, and they would care about who did it. And I wanted a regular job. When you're doing illustration, every day you've got to look for a new job. And you've got to run around with your portfolio and be rejected all the time.

MF: What was your inspiration for a strip about Gertrude Stein and her companion, Alice B. Toklas?



TH: I knew of them, but I didn't know much about them. And then I saw a photograph of them. A famous photograph of them sitting in a room at their home on the Rue de Fleurus in Paris. I looked at this famous lesbian couple sitting across from one another—so far apart—and I thought: "look at that! One of them is fat, and the other one's skinny. That's funny. They're just like a comedy routine. I wonder if they had fun." It didn't look as if they were having any fun in that picture; they just looked like they were posing for a picture. But I thought: "maybe they ran around and had lots of fun." And I thought: "I bet it'd be fun to draw Gertrude and Alice havings lots of fun." So I started drawing pictures of them, and drawing pictures of their friend Pabs, and looking at pictures of them, and looking at pictures of Picasso. And then I started doing these strips of them in my sketchbook. I've always kept sketchbooks. Always been drawing and writing ideas down in sketchbooks. Whenever I would work on an illustration I would always do far too many sketches than I ever needed to. I worked hard on my ideas when I did illustration, and I kept them all in a little sketchbook. As a result, I was gathering all this material that was never used because the art directors would usually reject the illustrations, or if they used it, they would just use one idea and they never took the really good ideas. Anyway, I started drawing Gertrude and Alice and Pabs and Hemingway and putting them into situations in my sketchbook. Here's Gertrude and Alice in their house, eating brownies, and Pabs comes to the door. Ding Dong. And he's their friend, and there he is, so he came in, and that's how it all began. I started imagining situations for them. Basically, I was doing ABBOTT & COSTELLO or I LOVE LUCY starring Gertrude, Alice, and their friends. There was also a MONTY PYTHON influence there. They would do bits of historical characters. And SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE would do it, too. There's nothing new about doing that. Then I started reading their biographies and books about their relationship. And they really did have a beautiful, loving, devoted, long-lasting relationship. A healthy relationship that lasted many years. And I admired that. *That* was inspiration. They loved one another. That was important—that they loved one another. Well, there it was in the sketchbooks. And I'd show it to people and I'd get different responses. Often people would ask: who are you doing this for? and what are you doing this for? And I didn't know. But I knew it would make a nice comic strip in a newspaper. And that narrowed it down. Here was a comic strip about a lesbian couple and all their artist friends. There weren't too many newspapers that were going to publish this. In fact, I thought, there's only one. And I started to watch the *Soho News*, wondering where it would fit. Where could they put this thing? Would they give me a whole page to do a comic strip?

MF: You once remarked that there have been other same-sexed character teams in syndicated comics.

TH: Like Mutt and Jeff! I don't know if they were gay, but I

PLEASE PUSSY DON'T
NO PUSSY NO PUSSY PLEASE PUSSY DON'T
NO PUSSY PLEASE PUSSY PLEASE PUSSY NO PUSSY
PLEASE PUSSY NO PUSSY
WHERE'S ERNIE?
GONE
HE RAN AWAY
SO?
GERTRUDE'S follies
©1979 T. HACHTMAN
SO WHY DID HEMINGWAY RUN AWAY?
I DON'T KNOW.
WAS IT SOMETHING THAT WE SAID?
OR WAS IT SOMETHING IN HIS HEAD?
DO YOU THINK HE COULDN'T SEE
THAT WE ARE PARTNERS, SEXUALLY?

© T. Hachtman

have my suspicions. I mean they did live in that room together, didn't they? Then there's Krazy Kat and Ignatz. No one ever did know what sex Krazy was, but there was a S&M relationship for you. Still, they loved one another...

MF: But Gertrude and Alice are somewhat different.

TH: They're out of the closet! Occasionally you'll see them in bed together or in the shower together or kissing one another. On rare occasions. But you have to catch them off guard because usually they're just living together.

MF: Was the *Soho News* the only paper you took the strip to?

TH: No, I did take it first to the *Village Voice*. I knew they wouldn't take it. Right off in the first strip I had Alice refer to Picasso as "that little Spic". Now I knew the Voice wasn't going to publish a cartoon where you called anyone "a little Spic". But they were at the time a much more popular paper and I assumed they would pay much more money than the *Soho News* could afford to pay me. I took it there next.

MF: Have you ever encountered any censorship of your strip?

TH: At the *Soho News*? Not at all. I must give them a great deal of credit for this...

MF: Can I ask how much you were earning from your comic strip when it was first published?

TH: No, you can't ask me that. It's too embarrassing. I'll tell you what I was making. Nothing. No, I was making a little more than nothing... For the first ten weeks, they didn't pay me at all. I knew this was going to happen because I knew people who had worked for that newspaper before I worked for the newspaper. They paid me very little, and the tiny amount they were supposed to pay—wasn't coming. So it was after the tenth week that I did the famous "Gertrude and Alice don't do anything until they get their money" strip. It was called "Backstage at Les Follies Gertrude", and they didn't even talk. Gertrude wrote a note saying: we don't go on until we get paid. And for the rest of the strip they just sat. Alice struck a match and lit up a cigarette—and inhaled. In the last panel she yawned. And that was it. They publicized the fact that if I wasn't paid, I couldn't go on with the strip. When the publisher saw that strip, I heard that he wanted to fire everyone. I heard that he went through the roof. I heard that I was never going to work for that newspaper again. But nothing happened...he never even said a word to me about it. But he did start paying me. And they've been paying me regularly ever since. They're even paying me five times as much now. It's still a pathetic amount. And the comic strip isn't syndicated...it appears exclusively in the *Soho News*.

MF: Can you imagine a time when it will be syndicated?

TH: A daily strip about a lesbian couple—I just can't imagine it, especially with the new administration. No, it's still at the

dream stage. Yet, I keep thinking: who's going to know? It's just two people who happen to be of the same sex and they're roommates who have lots of fun together. They could do all this funny stuff and who would have to know? We'd just keep them in the closet for the daily strip... And no one has to know about the illegal substance Alice puts in her brownies and why they feel so weird after they eat them. Sure they could be syndicated. It's one of the dreams of my life. There'd be Gertrude and Alice stuffed toys and piggy banks and lunch boxes. And there they will be in color dancing on your Sunday comic spaces. Really, their love...the fact that they loved one another transcends all of this other stuff.

MF: Are you consciously trying to change people's attitudes with your comic strip?

TH: I just want people to laugh. I think that's what a comic strip is all about. If I can't make them laugh, I want them to at least feel a little better. And I think that's part of what seeing a couple together should be about, too. You feel better when you see your friends together.

MF: Do you see the strip as art?

TH: IS THE STRIP ART???????? Uhhhhh. Yes, of course. Do I have to tell you why?

MF: Yes.

TH: Well, it looks real nice. I mean it's ink on paper and it makes you feel good. Isn't that art? Are you going to tell me that if somebody puts ink on paper and it makes people feel good that it *isn't* art? Sometimes the strip deals with genuine artistic dilemmas. Hmmmm. That doesn't make it art, though, does it? No, it's junk. It's crap on newsprint that you throw away. The newspapers turn all yellow and they just go into the garbage or the bottom of the birdcage or they wrap fish. Art? Art's in museums. Now if we could get this damn thing into a museum. If everybody out there would just take their "Gertrude's Follies" comic strips and cut them out of the newspaper and scotch tape them to the walls of museums, then it will be art... Right now this is just garbage. I mean I always see it in wastebaskets. It must be garbage; if it was art, people would be hanging on to it, not throwing it in the garbage.

MF: Where do you get your ideas for the strip?

TH: Do you have any particular episode in mind?

MF: For example, the one where Picasso samples his first hamburger at a fast food place.

TH: The ideas for that one came from a number of places. I must admit I was inspired by McDonald's and their packaging of food. Food has never before been presented like this in squeaky little styrofoam boxes and no knives or forks.

WE THREATEN HIS MANHOOD.
WE DON'T EVEN WEAR BLACK LEATHER.
HE THINKS WE'RE NO GOOD.
WE DON'T EVEN SLEEP TOGETHER.
IT'S DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE..
THAT HE COULD BE SO NAIVE.
YOU KNOW HE WRITES FOR MAGAZINES...
THAT SHOW ALL SORTS OF KINKY SCENES.
MACHO
WHY DID HEMINGWAY RUN AWAY?
I DON'T KNOW.
© T. Hachtman

© T. Hachtman

And I had read that they were opening one of their restaurants on the Champs Elysees in Paris. And I thought: that's where Gertrude lives! She and Alice and Pabs could go to the new burger joint in town. And Pabs would play with his food like the real-life Picasso would do. As far as the precise inspiration for what Pabs does in the strip—that part goes back a long way. I used to do this paper cup in the mouth routine. You open your mouth very wide, put in a paper cup, and walk around making noises. This would embarrass my older brother so much he would pretend that we weren't together. As for the goggles, I was at a McDonald's very late one night, exhausted and giddy from having worked many hours trying to meet a deadline. I made a pair of goggles out of a McDonald's container, put a paper cup in my mouth and one on my head. Then I took two of those long spoons they have, and straws, and stuck them in as antennae and started making "ar ar" sounds. Soon everyone in the place was laughing. Someone even took pictures of me with a color Instamatic. It was one of those crazy moments. It happened before I was even doing "Gertrude", but eventually it found its way into one of the strips.

MF: Could you tell our readers a little bit about how you work? For example, what kinds of materials do you use?

TH: I usually use a pen. With ink in it. It's an Ultraflex fountain pen. Actually, my Ultraflex broke down and they don't make them anymore. This is a sad story. I love this Ultraflex—*loved* this Ultraflex so much that it was a tragedy when it finally broke down. I even did a comic strip about it breaking down. It broke down about the same time as the Three Mile Island Nuclear Facility in Harrisburg Pennsylvania broke down, and I did a strip called "The Nuclear Fountain Pen" with a lot of nuclear experts looking at my fountain pen, wondering what to do about it. I transplanted the nib into a Pelican pen, and it still works, but it's not the same. No insult meant to the people who make Pelican pens.

MF: What is the size of the original artwork for the strip?

TH: I like to work on a much larger scale than the size of the strip as it appears in the newspaper. The size that I work in, though, varies from week to week. I often make sketches for the strip, drawing one panel in my sketchbook, another on a scrap of envelope, another on still another piece of paper. Then I put them together on top of my drawing table and pull out a page of my notebook. Then I cut the panels out and stick them together and then I've got to fit them into a space in the proportion of the space where it will appear in the newspaper. All I've got to do is fill that space, and I do it in the size that's easiest to do according to the scraps that I've accumulated. It always looks better when it's bigger. It's more work, but when you do more work, people like it better...

MF: What's it like to work on a weekly deadline?

TH: It has its ups and downs. It's good and bad. I should work ahead, but I do it the last minute. Sometimes that's bad because I don't get finished and it has to go into the newspaper anyway, and there'll be all these spaces where there should have been ink. It's good because I at least get something done once a week. Also, if you work this way, you can make the strip so topical. If something happens today, I can have it in my comic strip tomorrow. That's exciting. But sometimes it's a problem. Like when something terrible in the news happens and you feel you still have to be funny.

MF: Who are some of the cartoonists whose work you admire?

TH: Of the underground people, beginning with the greats, I admire Robert Crumb, Rick Griffin—all the *Zap* people. They were a great inspiration to me, especially Griffin. There's a bunch of good aboveground people, too. I enjoy Hagar (Dik Browne), and Charles Schulz is very good. It's like a confession when I admit I love aboveground people. I love to say I like Crumb, but when I admire the creator of Snoopy, I start to get a little ill, and it is like a confession. I do laugh at the simplest and dumbest things he does. In fact, the simpler and dumber, the more I usually laugh. I used to love *Superman* comics. It made the barber-shop bearable if they had piles of *Superman*. I used to love Mort Drucker's *Jerry Lewis* comics; I'm not sure if I loved Mort Drucker or Jerry Lewis. And I loved *Ripley's*. I even read his biography when I was young. I had hard cover *Ripley Believe-It-Or-Not* books which my grandfather had given to me. There were even Ripley museums. That's how cartoon work becomes art. You have your own museum... Special mention should also go to Hank Ketcham for *Dennis the Menace*. And to Monty Python, especially to Terry Gilliam. And to Carl Barks, the greatest American living artist. He should be having retrospectives at the Metropolitan and the Whitney. Really, Carl Barks should be right up there.

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MF: Are you an underground cartoonist?

TH: Some people call me an underground cartoonist. I'm hardly working for an underground newspaper though I have in my strip some of the things that underground cartoonists have been cashing in over: like drugs and sex.... As long as I live in a loft that has a bathroom so small that the door has a piece cut out of it so that it can swing past the toilet, I will consider myself an underground cartoonist. Someday when I have a big bathroom, I'll let you call me an overground cartoonist. And I will probably be a syndicated cartoonist if I have a big bathroom. Because as long as you work for one newspaper only, you're not going to have a big bathroom.

MF: How did you first get started in cartooning?

TH: I started by doing cartoons for surfing magazines when surfing was becoming popular. East Coast surfing magazines, not the big ones—the small-time, East Coast, small-wave magazines.

MF: Did you have formal art school training?

TH: Yes, later I went to the Philadelphia College of Art where I studied illustration. There they didn't want me to do comics, but I did some cartoons for underground newspapers like *The Distant Drummer* in Philadelphia. One day they arrested some kids because they were selling newspapers in the park. But when they opened up the newspaper—it was *The Distant Drummer*—and read my comic strip, they changed their minds and instead they arrested the kids for selling obscene literature... I also started to do airbrush work. I was intrigued by grotesque cartoon styles and I started doing weirdo tee-shirts for everyone in the neighborhood with airbrush. Then I started using airbrush for illustration. I became an airbrush illustrator. It proved very popular. When I came back to New York after college, a lot of people were interested in it. Art directors would call and say: I've got a job for you. And when I went in, I found they wanted airbrushed shoes or something.

MF: What was the next step in your career in comics?

TH: Well, there was the Art Studio. They couldn't continue working in New York without giving their agents a commission on jobs they got, so they would do work outside of New York and that included underground comics. Things like *Drool Comics* and *Cloud Comics*, for which I did work.

MF: Now that you are working on a storyboard for a feature-length animated film as well as your weekly strip, what difficulties do you face in shifting from one to the other?

TH: One difference is you don't have to put any talk balloons in an animated cartoon. I still always make a space for them. So I have to adjust to that, but it's really not difficult. What's difficult about an animated film? Seeing somebody else draw your characters, that's difficult. And making one big, long narrative that has a good ending—it's easier doing a series of short things. But tying everything together, making one continuity that moves smoothly—that's the more difficult thing.

MF: Do you have any words of advice for the budding cartoonists among our readers?

TH: Advice, gang. You ready for this? Make me laugh or quit, you bums. If you make me laugh, you're a success. If you don't make me laugh, in my book, you're a failure and you should quit. So that's it. No. That's not good advice. The real answer is: draw like a son-of-a-bitch. DRAW, DRAW, DRAW. I believe it's good advice. Draw from the television if you're going to sit and watch the Goddam television, yes, draw from it. Draw from life. Draw your friends even though they'll hate the pictures you draw of them. It's fun to draw your friends. Make a comic strip of your friends. That's the best thing to do. You do it like a diary. You do a drawing diary. Every day people say silly things, act weird, do stuff you just don't understand. You write it down. You draw a little picture. You design a simple little character that looks like your mother or whoever. And you put a balloon over her head and you write the ridiculous things she says. Or even if they're boring things, someday you'll have them in this book like a diary. Keep sketchbooks. Draw, draw, draw, draw. Now about selling your work, you have to figure out who will buy the garbage you're doing. There's lots of trade magazines. Chances are if you like something there's a magazine about it. For instance, there are jogging magazines, roller skating magazines, skate*board* magazines, even—just about anything you can think of to do from collecting matchcovers on, there will be a magazine devoted to it. So if you do cartoons about any of these activities, send them to the magazines that are involved with them. That's what I did with my surfing cartoons. You get very little money, but you get your stuff in print. Take a realistic approach: who wants to use what you do? Who needs you? WHO NEEDS YOU? Somebody does. You just have to try and find 'em.

REVIEWS

Reprint Follies I: The Pale Pink Kid

By BILL BLACKBEARD

This is the first in a series of articles by Bill Blackbeard, curator of the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, on the eighty-year history of reprinting comic strips in book form.

There is a marvelous William Steig drawing somewhere of a little armless man, walking frantically and fast, his eyes bugging out, with a gigantic *screw* ground through his middle. Steig's hopelessly shafted image is clearly meant to stand for anyone being systematically reamed by fate, but it does seem to have particular and prolonged application to the newspaper comic-strip collector, reader, or researcher, so far as their treatment at the hands of American publishers is concerned. These poor, often devoted guys have been screwed up, down, backwards, and forwards since the turn of the century by virtually every book or magazine reprint collection made from a comic strip. The exceptions are very few, and sadly do not even include many of the reprint collections *I* have edited and entrusted to publishers. The damage wrought to the referential accessibility of a major creative field has been staggering, much of it certain to be irremedial for decades. There have been, of course, and are, grimly consistent reasons for this shafting, but before exploring these in any pointed detail, let's examine what our well-screwed reader has had to put up with for so long, and take a selective look at the hundreds of reprint books and magazines based on newspaper comic strips published since 1897—a selective and appalled look.

We start in 1897, of course, because there was only one comic strip at all prior to that year (R.F. Outcault's *Yellow Kid* for October 18, 1896, provided the definitive format for the genre), and the first book or periodical reprint of a newspaper strip anywhere appeared the following year—in March 1897, to be precise. The production was, in fact, a periodical outwardly disguised as a book: issue No. 24 of Dillingham's American Author's Library, issued monthly at $6.00 a year. The fifty-cent paperback's title was *The Yellow Kid in McFadden's Flats*, and it was bylined, "E.W. Townsend, author of *Chimmie Fadden*, and R.F. Outcault, creator of *The Yellow Kid*." The G.W. Dillingham Company, then in New York, generally printed popular fiction and humor in its monthly series (interestingly, the back cover of No. 24 announced, "The Most Popular Comic Books Ever Published," but the reference was to prose: the writings of Artemus Ward and Josh Billings), and seemingly took a flyer on this strip reprint only to cash in on the New York area notoriety of the Kid. The venture was apparently well repaid,

since a copy of the book in the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art bears a "thirtieth thousand" imprimature under the Yellow Kid's toes on the cover.

The book itself was what we would today call a "quality paperback," with sewn, rag-paper signatures and stout paper covers; its fifty-cent price was the 1897 equivalent (at a time when a quarter would buy a good meal of stew and coffee) of about $3.50 today. Thirty thousand copies sold at such a figure to the relatively smaller New York reading populace of the period was certainly an impressive sale. But the actual contents of the book these purchasers received were not very impressive, so far as Outcault's *Kid* strip was concerned. In fact, Dillingham's negligently casual treatment of his book's comic-strip material set the pattern for virtually all of the strip reprint collections to follow.

In terms of prose, the book was probably considered good value by the purchaser. Edward W. Townsend's written commentary on the Yellow Kid's paneled antics, originally published in part with the Outcault drawings on the front page of William Randolph Hearst's weekly New York *Journal* comic section, and heavily amended to fit the Dillingham book concept, very likely pleased those who had read and enjoyed Townsend's then-famed Chimmie Fadden series. His books of short Fadden stories—like Outcault's

Kid—dealt humorously with boyhood in the New York slums. The characteristic Townsend note in *Chimmie Fadden* was light, rarely reaching the slapstick norm of Outcault's work, but the author nevertheless managed to adapt his mild comic prose effectively enough to the hectic foibles of the Kid and his ragged gang. The point is, however, that to the perceptive Outcault *Kid* devotee of the time, *anyone's* words would have been wasted in the ferociously funny presence of Outcault's art. That Hearst realized this fairly soon is evidenced by his swift elimination of the Townsend text from the weekly Outcault continuity, after which the liberated *Yellow Kid* half-page moved happily toward that definitive comic-strip episode of 10/18/1896 which prefigured a major narrative form for the twentieth century.

Dillingham, however, was clearly afraid of reprinting the Outcault strip in a book by itself. People were not used to thinking of newspaper comic supplement material in the same way they thought of the cartoon art of *Punch* or even the rowdier American *Puck*. Books of cartoons by the highly regarded contributors to these august journals were perfectly in keeping with the divine order of things, but cartoon art in newspapers was felt to be an immeasurably meaner thing altogether. And surely a particularly nasty item like the horrid *Yellow Kid* (of which everyone had heard, but few would admit to having seen, since that would mean having purchased a copy of the detested lowbrow Hearst *Journal*) could have no conceivable pretense to art at all. Yet there was clearly money to be made from providing a presentable version of the *Kid* strip, one that could permissibly satisfy the curiosity of the properly groomed public. To Dillingham, that meant hedging his bet with acceptable Townsend prose—in effect, to immerse the brightly hued bomb of the *Kid* in a defusing bucket of Townsend narrative.

Somewhere along the line, Dillingham also decided that his *Kid* book needed a linking theme not present to his eye in the week-to-week gag payoffs of the newspaper strip. The Kid's yellow nightshirt balloon on the book's cover tipped the reader to what the interpolated theme was to be: "Dis Book," the nightshirt proclaimed, "is De Story of Me Sweet Young Life." This outside approach meant considerable recasting of the *Kid* prose Townsend had written for the *Journal* Sunday page many months earlier, as well as a major reshaping of the implicit content of the Outcault strip episodes from which the book's art was to be selected and on which most of the direct narrative text of the book had to be based.

The result of all this jiggery-pokery was a book which, for the most part, gave the reader little idea of how an actual *Yellow Kid* strip looked (or even read) in the Sunday color pages. The Outcault strip art used in the book was black and white, and largely redrawn by an inferior hand (presumably because of the disappearance of the original art in even that short span of time, the absence at so early a point of the very concept of strip proofs, and the extreme difficulty of deriving usable black-and-white art from printed color pages), while the panels were much reduced from their *Journal* size, and rearranged in sequence to fit the new Townsend text and theme.

(For one magic stretch of five pages, however, the book does come sharply alive for the contemporary strip fan. Between pages 177 and 187, five actual Outcault Sunday panels appear in complete strip sequence, dialogue balloons and all.* Apparently the original art proved to be available for this one strip, and Dillingham was astute enough to make use of it. Curiously, the contrast between these five superb originals and the crude tracery of the rest of the book's art does not seem to have struck him as noticeable or embarrassing.)

The Dillingham book then, in its overall context, tamed the blatant vulgarity of the Hearst-Outcault *Kid* pages to such an extent that many people buying it must have wondered what all the excitement was about, and whether Hearst's much-denounced "yellow" *Journal* feature could be as "bad" for the "impressionable public" as it was painted in more proper publications. To any reasonably objective viewer, of course, it was not "bad" in either an esthetic or moral sense, but the point is that the Dillingham book so distorted the actual strip that no worthwhile judgement of its intrinsic nature could possibly by made after the book's structural and sequential demolition job. As a result, this book (the *only* book collection ever made of the *Yellow Kid* strip) was so useless for either serious study of the work or re-enjoyment of it that it might as well not have been published at all.

The fundamental misstep taken with the Dillingham *Yellow Kid*, as we can see in retrospect, was not to have had the Outcault art redrawn—that was a bad but understandable solution to a problem that was not to emerge again for decades; nor to dilute the visual and textual integrity of the strip with prose narrative—that again was a one-time solution to a fancied problem with presentation which did not recur to any extent until the Whitman Big Little Book fiasco of the 1930s; nor even to rip the original strip episodes apart and spread the truncated, often borderless panels through the book, nefarious in effect as that was. What Dillingham did that was so deadly, even at this primitive stage of comic strip development, was to *select* a few weekly *Kid* episodes from a great many others, out of all creative and published sequence, with no notation at any point of their original order or date of publication, and reprint them willy-nilly in a form dictated solely by the publisher's fancy. In effect, a memorable and competent creative work of great strength and dignity in its own original form, from which a substantial section might have been hewn and effectively exhibited, was instead ruthlessly mined for a handful of tawdrily repainted nuggets to be strung on a string and swung in the gaslight of Publishers' Row for a few brief hours.

The Yellow Kid in McFadden's Flats is now only a curious relic from the very beginnings of the comic strip, but its initial and basic mistreatment of the genre was to be tragically repeated in various forms and guises from that time on, through hundreds of reprint publications.

Après Dillingham, le dèluge.

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*The fact of this strip episode reproduction, as well as the book's nominal periodicity as a publication, would seem to make *The Yellow Kid in McFadden's Flats* the first "comic book."

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Above, a photostatic frame blow-up in which Disney director Wilfred Jackson dances with Marjorie Belcher (with gag balloon added by some anonymous hand); the live-action film was taken as a guide for the animators of the party sequence in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. *The layout drawing for the party sequence reproduced at right is not from the* Snow White *book but is similar to many reproduced in the book; this drawing was exhibited at Lincoln Center in New York in 1973. Notice the instruction ("S.W. roto #188") for the use of rotoscoped animation of Snow White.*

'Snow White' in Shades of Grey

By MIKE BARRIER

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Viking; $29.95) was first published in 1978 in a deluxe limited edition, with a price tag of $260; the inexpensive edition differs from the deluxe edition primarily in the absence of four serigraph cels (that is, cels that are actually silk-screen prints, rather than individually hand-painted) of the kind that Disney has been marketing through art galleries recently. The new edition does contain a number of color plates that reproduce what appear to be newly traced and repainted cels, photographed over background paintings. The tracings are poorly done—the lines are hard and dead—and the inking and painting alike lack the refinements that were visible in the film itself. I would imagine that the serigraphs suffer from the same defects (I have not seen the deluxe edition), and so their absence could not be considered a loss, even if they had not inflated the book's price to such a wildly improbable height.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is made up for the most part of hundreds of drawings for the film from which it takes its name—character layouts, background layouts, and story sketches, all arranged so as to illustrate the story, which is retold in a superfluous text. Explanatory notes do not accompany the drawings; there is instead, an uncredited text piece at the rear of the book that explains the purposes of the different kinds of illustrations. Unfortunately, the author does not seem to be aware of the distinction between character layouts and background layouts (it is a distinction that is smudged within the animation industry itself), and so a number of background layouts are identified as "story sketches" or "animation layouts"—identifications that are variously incorrect or misleadingly vague.

There is a second text piece, an account of the filming of *Snow White*

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by Steve Hulett of the Disney staff. It is a surprisingly thin piece, considering how much research material is available in the Disney Archives (there is, however, no indication in the book itself that the Archives was involved in its production). Hulett seems to have relied mostly on interviews with a few of the people who worked on the film, and this has led him to include a few statements that are at least questionable. For example, he quotes Ken Anderson's description of a meeting early in 1935 at which Walt Disney told the whole story of *Snow White*; but I wonder if Anderson is not thinking of another meeting, in December 1936. A transcript of what Disney said at that meeting is in the Disney Archives, but there is no record of a 1935 meeting of that kind, and I doubt seriously that the story had been sufficiently worked out by early in 1935 for Disney to have given the kind of performance that Anderson describes.

Likewise, I question Hulett's statement that Disney put Bill Tytla and Fred Moore to work on test animation of the Dwarfs as early as mid-1935; this almost certainly did not take place until 1936. (Most of the actual production of *Snow White*—once the story was in reasonably solid shape—took place in 1937, the year of the film's premiere.)

Finally, Hulett, in explaining why the live-action film for Snow White and the Prince had to be traced, rather than blown up as photostats as guides for the animators, says that "there were no photographic frame blowups available in the mid-thirties." That is simply wrong; one such blowup (of director Wilfred Jackson and Marge Belcher acting out a scene in which Dopey, on Sneezy's shoulders, is dancing with Snow White) is reproduced here, and I have seen other blowups in which Perce Pearce (a Disney director who was esteemed for his impersonation of Doc) is dancing with Miss Belcher.

There is, in short, no reason to buy the book except for the reproductions of drawings that were used in the production of the film; happily, they are reason enough. A little of this material has been published before, in Christopher Finch's *The Art of Walt*

Disney, but most of it is new to anyone who did not work on *Snow White*. What is most exciting about this material, I think, is what it shows about how the characters evolved; in many of the drawings, the Dwarfs in particular are "off-character," with scant resemblance to how they finally appeared in the film. There are drawings here that suggest that *Snow White* could easily have wound up looking much like the Fleischers' *Gulliver's Travels*, if Disney had been content to stop at a certain point. It was largely because he insisted on molding the Dwarfs into characters more appealing than anything the Fleischers ever dreamed of that *Snow White* lives in millions of memories and still, every few years, in thousands of theaters, while *Gulliver* is forgotten by everyone except a few animation buffs.

The drawings in the book are a demonstration of how many pains Disney took not only in the development of the characters but in work on every other aspect of the film as well. The drawings are incredibly plentiful and detailed, and yet most of them were only intermediate steps, never intended for public scrutiny.

Since most of these drawings are in pencil, they are reproduced, appropriately, in black and white. But, in an apparent effort to justify the book's high price, there is color on almost every page, in the form of illuminations in the text and a repeated floral decoration surrounding each page number. The effect is odd, since the unnecessary color encourages the impression that the illustrations really aren't as important as the text. And yet this edition of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, if it has a market at all, must be sold as an art book, as *The Art of Walt Disney* was. Because the book's design is so poor, and the thinking behind it so muddled, it is unclear which market it was intended for. (*Walt Disney's Treasury of Children's Classics*, published in 1978 by Abrams, suffers from the same ambiguity of purpose.) I have seen copies of *Snow White* stacked carelessly in the children's sections of bookstores; I am sure it will be ignored there (especially with a $30 price tag), but the bookstores' confusion only mirrors that of the book itself.

Animated films are uniquely suitable for art-book treatment, because they are made up of drawings, and the great Disney films are the most suitable of all, because so many ideas took shape on paper when those films were being made. And yet, so far, only one recent book—Finch's *Art of Walt Disney* in 1973—has come even close to being the kind of book that should spring naturally from the Disney studio's vast holdings of artwork. *The Art of Walt Disney* recently went through its twelfth printing, and more than a quarter million copies are now in print, so the absence of any real successors cannot be blamed on lack of interest among book buyers in well-produced Disney books aimed at an adult audience. We might have expected handsome books devoted to the production of each of the great features, and perhaps a volume on the shorts. We have had, instead, Finch's rehash of *The Art of Walt Disney*, in his *Walt Disney's America*; the awkardness of the *Snow White* and *Treasury* books; and the foolishness of *Mickey Mouse: Fifty Happy Years*, to mention only the most prominent offenders. The same pieces of artwork—the same publicity drawings, in particular—turn up in book after book, while much more interesting material goes unpublished.

The films at least survive, independent of the books that are written about them, but the same is not true of the Mickey Mouse comic strips by Floyd Gottfredson and the Donald Duck comic-book stories by Carl Barks that are now turning up in hard covers, via Abbeville Press. I am sure that many readers of the new Abbeville books are only dimly aware, if at all, that these stories once appeared in vastly different (and vastly superior) form. For these readers, it will not be a case of turning from the books to the real thing, since the original newspaper and comic-book printings are not readily available. These disgraceful books will *be* the real thing—and many readers may conclude, with some justification, that the old stories were not so great after all. Although these books will make the names of Carl Barks and Floyd Gottfredson better known, they cannot add much to their reputations.

The reprint volumes from Abbeville Press are the devil's own concoction. If the books sell, it will be taken as proof that most readers do not care how much the stories are mutilated; if the books do not sell, it will be taken as proof that there is no market for reprints of Barks and Gottfredson stories. In either case, the mere existence of the books works against the possibility that reprint volumes of real quality will ever be published.

These books are identified on their front covers as "Walt Disney Best Comics," and the natural question is why, if these are indeed the "best comics," they are treated with so little respect. The clear implication is that even the "best" Disney comics deserve no more than a kick in the teeth. Likewise, the Disney film books in effect proclaim that the films are worthy of serious attention ($30 for a book is pretty serious to most people) and then work very hard to undermine that proposition.

This is a curious state of affairs, and I don't really know how to explain it; perhaps the Disney studio has grown uncomfortable with the most widely cherished relics from its past, and even resents them a little bit. It is, after all, unlikely that anyone will ever want to publish a richly illustrated tribute to *Robin Hood* or *The Rescuers*, and the highest ambition of the current Disney comics is not to give pleasure, but to avoid giving offense. Perhaps the feeling is that if *Snow White* and Barks's Donald Duck and Gottfredson's Mickey Mouse are taken *too* seriously—that is, as seriously as they deserve to be taken—a side effect will be to give the films and comics that have succeeded them a black eye. Thus the classic films and comics must be kept in their place—praised as if they were art, but treated as if they were only merchandise, and rather shoddy merchandise at that.

That is not a happy thought, but the current crop of Disney books is not conducive to happy thoughts.

Shabbeville

By KIM WESTON

Abbeville Press has just published the third and fourth volumes of its series of Disney comics reprints, *Goofy* and *Uncle Scrooge*. (See *Funnyworld* No. 20 for reviews of *Mickey Mouse* and *Donald Duck*.) *Uncle Scrooge* has a brief foreword by Carl Barks.

I don't know the exact origins of the *Goofy* book as it is my understanding that there has been no Mondadori *Goofy* book. Possibly it is leftover strips that were not reprinted from the Mondadori Mickey Mouse book *Io, Topolino* but not having that volume or access to it, I can't say for sure. The format is the same as the Abbeville *Mickey Mouse* reprinting Gottfredson *Micky Mouse* strips from 1933 to 1942. The first story, "Mickey Mouse and the Terrible Bandit Wolf Barker," is a Sunday continuity; all the dates are there and it is apparently complete. As in the *Mickey Mouse* volume, English dialogue has been relettered in, presumably the original dialogue but again I don't have the original strips to compare it with.

The other eight stories are reprinted from daily strips, most of them dated, and there are apparently only two dailies missing (unnecessarily), those from January 11, 1941 (page 122) and May 5, 1941 (page 158). The apparent completeness of this book leads me to suspect that the later strips in the *Mickey Mouse* book are probably essentially complete too, and maybe it is only some of the early strips (like Tanglefoot) that have wholesale cuts in them.

In the sense of textual completeness, *Goofy* is a better book than *Mickey Mouse* but still is not as good as it should be. These strips should be reprinted from the original American strips (or proofs of them) and in the case of the dailies, in black and white, although I don't find the color as objectionable as does Bill Blackbeard (see letters column). In many places the reproduction is muddy, as if printed newspaper strips had been used as source material in the presumed original Italian printing of this book, but this may be partly due to the coloring. The book makes good reading, although it is not the authoritive scholarly reference it could and should be.

I compared the "Phantom Blot" story as printed here with *Mickey Mouse* Color—No. 16 (c. 1940) and found that a few panels and virtually all of the lead-in captions had been dropped from the comic book. The comic book does have, apparently, the original lettering and dialogue and the changes are few and minor in the book. So of the published reprints of this most famous of Mickey Mouse stories, this is the most complete (and cheapest) version available. From 1936 comes "The Great Ostrich Race." All the other stories, "Mighty Whale Hunter," "Dude Ranch Bandit," "Cave Man Island," "Jewel Robbery," "Love Trouble," and "Black Crow Mystery," were reprinted in *Mickey Mouse Magazine* or *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* before or during World War II, and the "Whale Hunter," "Phantom Blot," and "Dude Ranch Bandit" stories were redrawn as serials in *WDC & S* in 1950, 1949, and 1959, respectively, by Bill Wright or Paul Murry ("Dude Ranch").

If the *Goofy* book is better than Abbeville's *Mickey Mouse, Uncle Scrooge* is greatly inferior to *Donald Duck* and definitely Not Recommended, even for casual reading.

The book starts off with "Christmas on Bear Mountain" (*Donald Duck* Four Color No. 178, 1947), the first story with Uncle Scrooge. The two panels dropped from the last page of the story are the least of its problems. The dialogue is changed in most panels as if it had been retranslated from Italian rather than just relettered from American comic books and the art is really butchered. Instead of the eighteen-panels-per-page format of the *Donald Duck* book, there are about thirty panels to a page in this book, meaning that most panels have a third to a half their area trimmed at the sides, or the panel is so shrunken that the original full panel's art is printed in the bottom half of the panel space with dialogue balloons taking the top half, or both. But even though one can blame the butchery of the art on the original Italian edition, the butchery of the text is the sole responsibility of the people at Abbeville.

The art isn't quite so badly hurt in the second story, "The Old Castle's Secret" (*Donald Duck* Four Color No. 189, 1948), which goes back to the eighteen-panel format of the *Donald Duck* book, but there are still many changes in the text.

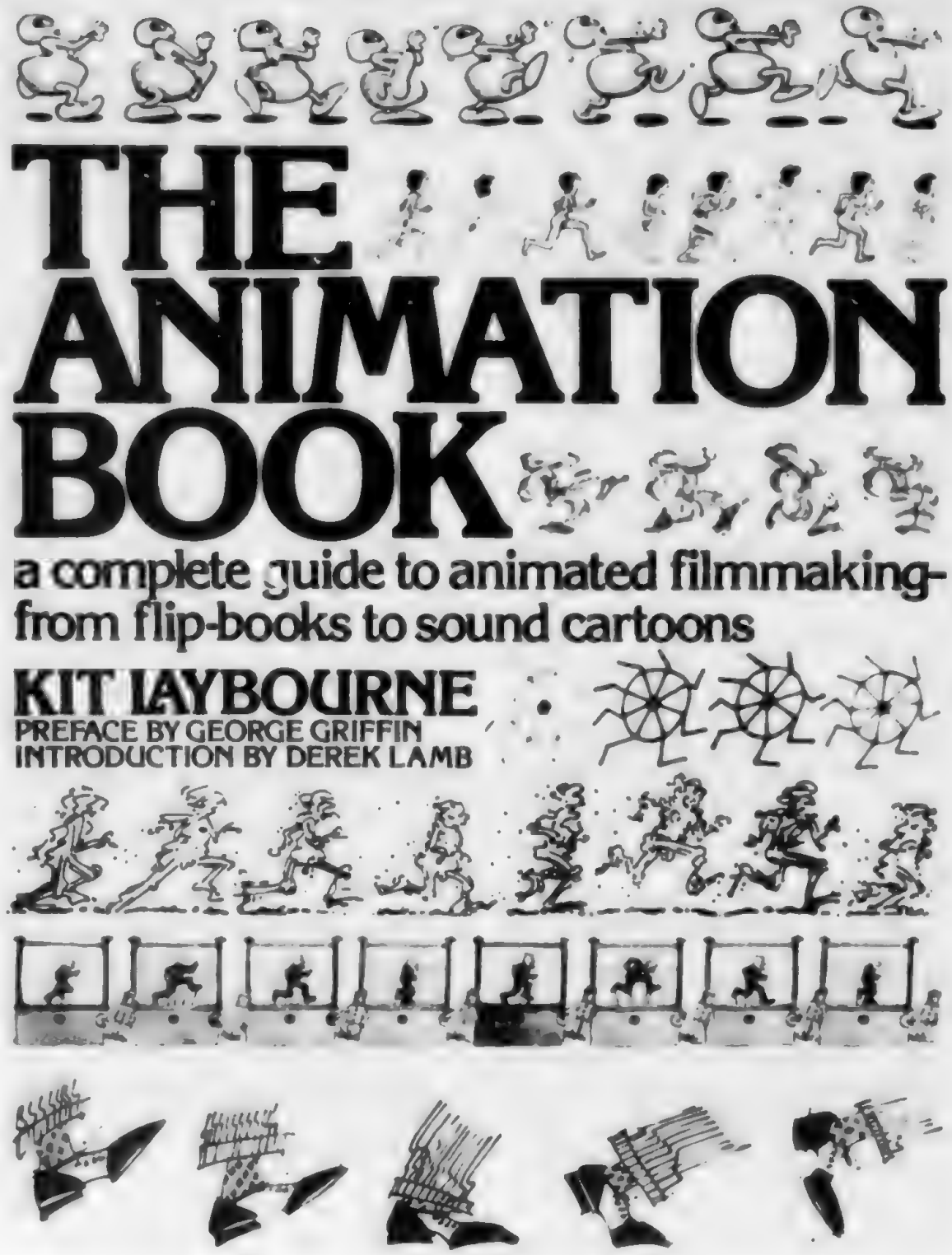
The next story is "The Twenty-Four Carat Moon" from *Uncle Scrooge* No. 24, 1959. Printed twenty-four panels to the page, its art is not so savagely cut as "Christmas on Bear Mountain." There are not so many panels with a third of the art hacked off but many have been shrunk to about half panel size. Except for "McDuck of Arabia" (*Uncle Scrooge* No. 55, 1965), which is eighteen panels to the page, the rest of the stories are reprinted twenty-four panels to a page, and all of the other stories are from the early and middle sixties. There is some trimming of panels but more often the art has just been shrunk from its original published size of about two by three inches per panel to about half that. The worse problem is the great changes inflicted on the Barks dialogue. What remains is in large part robbed of its original sparkling wit, good humor, and subtlety. What remains is the bare bones. Buying Abbeville's *Uncle Scrooge* is like buying a chicken when you're hungry and finding nothing but a skeleton when you get it home to cook. Save your money on this book.

The sad thing is, it could have been a good book or at least it could have been made a much better book just by using Barks's original dialogue. It could have been made a better survey, at no additional cost for production, by including "Voodoo Hoodoo," "Letter to Santa," "Seven Cities of Cibola," and "The Golden Fleecing," which were in the Mondadori *Donald Duck* but not the Abbeville, and eliminating some of the later stories. And if "Pirate Gold," which is in the Mondadori *Scrooge*, had been substituted into the Abbeville *Donald Duck*, that would have freed a couple more early Scrooge stories for use in the *Scrooge* volume, so that it

need not have concentrated so heavily on the sixties. Most of the Scrooge stories in this volume have been reprinted in recent years in the *Uncle Scrooge* comic book. Look for those reprints or wait for the next comic-book reprinting; the cost is the same or lower. And hope that the disgust felt by people ripped off by the Abbeville *Uncle Scrooge* abortion doesn't ruin the market for more thoughtfully done reprints in the future. Unfortunately, between the stories skipped by Abbeville from the Mondadori *Donald* and *Scrooge* volumes, there is enough material for Abbeville to do one more volume of these Italian-originated reprints.

Popular Mechanics

BY MIKE BARRIER


THE ANIMATION BOOK
a complete guide to animated filmmaking-from flip-books to sound cartoons
KIT LAYBOURNE
PREFACE BY GEORGE GRIFFIN
INTRODUCTION BY DEREK LAMB

The Animation Book by Kit Laybourne (Crown, paper, $9.95) is a handsome compendium of animation techniques, directed at those who want to make their own animated films but don't know how. The range of techniques extends from traditional cel animation to clay and puppet animation, collage and silhouette animation, and even sand and paint-on-glass animation. There are sections on tools and supplies of all kinds, lists of film distributors and training programs, and a reasonably complete bibliography, which does not include *Funnyworld* but does include something listed as *History of American Animation* by Mike Barrier, published by Oxford University Press in 1978. Laybourne evidently was even more optimistic than I was about how soon that book (which will not bear that title, by the way) would get into print. I didn't notice any other nonexistent books in his bibliography.

The Animation Book is, as far as I can tell (and a few animators have confirmed this) an accurate and comprehensive guide to what a beginner needs to know when he starts making his own animated films. It has much less to offer to those people who are most interested in the history and the esthetics of the medium, but that is not the book's territory.

The Animation Book does, however, have an esthetic point of view, one that is stated most clearly not by Laybourne but by the independent animator George Griffin, in his preface, which begins as follows:

"A new method of making animated films has surfaced in the last decade and with it a new generation of artists who use the medium primarily for self-expression. The new animators assume direct responsibility for nearly every aspect of the film-making process: concept, drawing, shooting, even camera stand construction. This reclamation of creative authority contrasts sharply with the impersonal assembly-line production system of the studio cartoon industry and returns animation to its original experimental impulse..."

There you have it. If you're all thumbs and can't build your own camera stand, you might as well be tracing Fred Flintstone model sheets at Hanna-Barbera.

The unstated assumption in Griffin's introduction is that self-expression is somehow basic to artistic integrity, or perhaps synonymous with it, even if the self that is being expressed is made up of nothing (so far as we can tell from the films themselves) but childish arrogance or sexual hysteria.

Notice that Griffin talks of a new generation of animators that has surfaced in the past decade—that is, the seventies, known quite widely (and correctly) as the Me Decade. There is

evident in Griffin's words a contempt for all of those people in animation who have to some extent submerged the self, rather than "expressing" it, in their work. He dismisses the opinion, "oft-repeated in cartoon studios, that it would take at least ten years of drawing experience to become a competent animator," and he lauds "the experimental method, which demands a personalization of technique and a rejection of formularized professionalism."

All of this should sound very familiar, since Griffin's attitudes are common currency not only among independent animators but in all the other arts as well. This rejection of "formularized professionalism" is most often a rejection of the audience—the viewing or reading public—as well. I recently ran across a quotation from the novelist Don DeLillo that sums up the situation nicely: "There's a whole class of writers who don't want their books to be read. This to some extent explains their crazed prose...What you want to express is the violence of your desire not to be read... If you're in this class, what you have to do is either not publish or make absolutely sure your work leaves readers strewn along the margins."

There is, likewise, a whole class of animated filmmakers who don't want their films to be seen, at least not outside the little circle that can be counted upon to applaud their work. This scorn for the audience, masked as artistic integrity, is in itself a mask for something else: a horror of being judged. In the Me Decade, nothing is so terrifying as a threat to self-esteem. Many artists, of all kinds, have tried to reduce such threats to a minimum by declaring that self-expression is what matters—which is to say, their work cannot be judged by any criterion except by one that the artists carry around inside their heads. There are plenty of independent animators whose work needs the crutch of "self-expression," because by any other standards it can only be considered pretentious, amateurish, and obscure.

On the other hand, there are a few independents whose films actually reflect a decent respect for the audience, and even a desire to give it pleasure—that is, to entertain it (surely the ultimate heresy). Some of Steve Segal's films fall in this category. But too often, when I see films by even the most admirable of independent animators - films like Caroline Leaf's *The Street* and Jacques Drouin's *Mindscape*—I am struck by how restricted and incomplete they are, compared to the best of the larger studios' animated films.

Animated films have traditionally been a great collaborative medium like motion pictures of all kinds—and as George Griffin indicates, this can be a liability when collaboration descends to the assembly-line level. But any collaboration worthy of the name does not reduce its participants to drones; it makes use of their strengths, instead. To that extent, self-expression is not only consistent with successful collaboration, but absolutely essential to it.

The result of such a collaboration can be a film that is much more than the sum of its makers' talents. The great Disney features are the prime examples. In talking to the people who worked on them, I rarely hear any complaints about the lack of opportunities for self-expression. There is instead gratitude for the opportunity to create life on the screen—to bring a fantastic array of creatures into existence, and through them to delight millions of people and enrich their lives. I have talked to many people for whom working on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Pinocchio* and *Fantasia* was the high point of their lives, and I have no difficulty in understanding why that should be the case. Not many of us will ever have the chance to give so much honest pleasure to so many people.

There are other examples in animation's history of inspired collaborations. Bob Clampett's color cartoons for Warner Brothers were enhanced immeasurably by the use he made of his animators, particularly Rod Scribner, and Chuck Jones's cartoons for the same studio are all the richer and funnier because Jones permitted Michael Maltese and Maurice Noble to exercise the full range of their talents in story and design, respectively. In both instances, the directors made brilliant use of collaborators whose strengths complemented the directors' own.

Animated films call for a great variety of talents, just as all films do, and it is highly unlikely that all of those talents will be bundled up in the same individual. Even an independent animator may have to have a little help, because someone else may be able to give shape to some of his ideas better than he can. At the least, he may have to hire a carpenter to build a camera stand—unless, that is, he is concerned only with the ideas, and not how well they are transferred to film. If that is the case, he can dispense even with the carpenter.

One last point must be made, in all fairness to the independent animators. Anyone who wishes to be part of a creative collaboration in animation these days will find the pickings pretty slim. For most people in the field, the choice is, indeed, between tracing Fred Flintstone and building that camera stand. My quarrel with the independent animators is not so much that they aren't flocking to work in Hollywood animation studios—none of the present studios, even Disney's, has much to offer anyone who cares deeply about animated films—but that they deny that anything good can ever come out of a sizable studio again. I have much more admiration for those people who—because they love animation even more than the independents love their precious selves—are spending their days tracing Fred Flinstone, but are acquiring special skills, and are planning for the day when they can do much more, in a studio where the emphasis is not on "self-expression" but on producing good films.

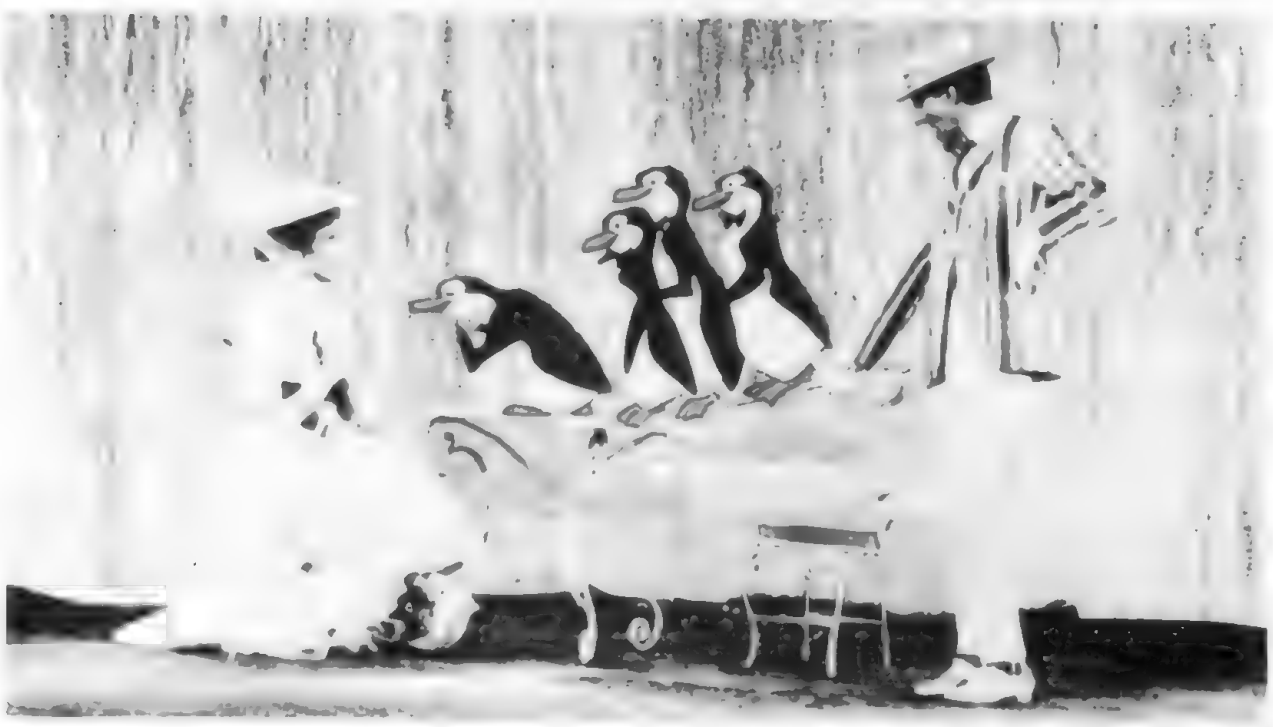
Mickey Mouse Music

By ROSS CARE

As the history of Disney studio animation spanned many innovations in cinema—sound, color, wide-screen and stereo-sound—so recordings of Disney soundtrack music have also spanned the development of recorded sound from its crude beginnings through hi-fi and multi-channel

recording. There were original soundtrack records from Disney films starting with 78 rpm singles and sets from the Silly Symphonies and early features in the thirties, and with the incorporation of Disney's own label, Disneyland, (in the fifties) fairly complete albums of both songs and background music from classic and current features were released in modern high-fidelity sound. (Most are still available on Disneyland's children's series, albeit in condensed form with a lot of background scoring removed.)

Anthologies of songs from Disney films have always been popular as well, and it was perhaps inevitable that the fiftieth anniversary of Disney animation would elicit yet another such collection. *The Magical Music of Walt Disney* (Ovation-5000) is one of the first contemporary attempts to consolidate the voluminous and often brilliant Disney musical oeuvre into one grouping but due to the very scope and diversity of the material from which it draws it is perhaps fated from the start to fall victim to the individual listener's personal tastes and preferences. *Magical Music* is a four-record set that takes the listener on a Disney musical trip of Wagnerian length from the crudely recorded but brilliant early shorts scores of the late twenties and early thirties to the brilliantly recorded but plastic kitsch of 1970s Magic Kingdom Muzak. Dick Schory (who spent twelve years at RCA Victor recording and producing, among other things, that company's "Stereo Action"—"The Sound Your Eyes Can Follow"—albums and the "Dyna-groove" recording process) has included many brilliant moments—it would have been hard not to—but as seems inevitable with most current Disney products, there's a lot of dead weight to be endured as well.



© Walt Disney Productions

Lady and the Tramp *(top) and* Mary Poppins *are among the Disney films most heavily represented in the* Magical Music *album.*

Indeed, the fact that the first two records span all the films from 1929 to 1953 (*Steamboat Willie* to *Peter Pan*) gives some idea of the speed speed with which the early years and music are dispatched. Side One opens with the overture to the "Mickey Mouse Review," Disney World's Audio-Animatronic attraction in which figures of Disney characters in an advanced state of blank-eyed rigor mortis vainly struggle to capture the fluidity of their animated personas. The music is a medley of Churchill/Harline songs that features a lot of kazoos in the orchestration. A 45-second snatch from *Steamboat Willie* follows, the famous "Turkey In the Straw" number in which Disney, Wilfred Jackson, and other early studio staff members made history by proving that sound could be an invaluable adjunct to Disney's style of animated film-making. Next is a medley from early Mickey shorts, 1929 to 1934. One of the most enjoyable tracks on the entire album, it however includes mainly popular standards done in the wonderfully frantic-Mouse-style of the early thirties and only two original selections by studio staff composers (two Churchill songs from *Mickey's Gala Premiere* and *Building A Building*). There are also two hysterical cuts from *Orphans' Benefit*: Donald Duck's famous recitations and Clara Cluck's version of the *Lucia* sextet, two remarkable (and uncredited) voice-characterization performances by Clarence Nash and Florence Gill.

Side One is rounded out by a generous abridgement of Leigh Harline's brilliant transcription of Rossini's "*William Tell* Overture" from

The Band Concert: the opening in which the Rossino imperceptibly metamorphoses into "Turkey In the Straw," the Pastorale movement, and the end of the cyclone sequence. An irritatingly extended operatic parody, this time by Cluck and Duck, ensues, followed by a performance of the "Light Calvary Overture" (from 1941's *Symphony Hour*) in a brilliantly manic style that is a cross between Spike Jones and Frank Zappa. We finally get to some original Disney staff compositions with a four-minute cut from *Three Little Pigs*—guess which song??!!—but it's the first and last we hear of any music from the Silly Symphonies! I could easily have traded few tracks from *Music Land*, *Country Cousin* or *Old Mill*, but the series that laid the groundwork for the brilliant musical work of the features is again inexplicably written off.

The next three sides are "digest" abridgements of feature scores. The *Snow White* track gives you most of the songs pretty straight; *Fantasia* is represented by Stokowski's conducting of "Sorcerer's Apprentice" but with the trippy, spatial "sound-your-eyes-can-follow" multi-track engineering of the original film straightened out. Harline's *Pinocchio* and the Churchill/Wallace *Dumbo* are represented by songs and bits of background scoring (behind dialogue). Churchill's ineffable *Bambi* music fares about the same, but includes more dialogue scenes and a fairly complete version of Ed Plumb's dramatically arranged orchestral transition out of the "Love Is A Song" reprise to the man-in-the-meadow music. In each case the poetic atmosphere of the film's rich orchestral-choral background scoring is pretty much bypassed or covered by dialogue and sound effects, particularly unfortunate in the case of *Pinocchio* and *Bambi*, two of the most beautiful scores ever concocted in Hollywood.

The forties, one of the richest periods in Disney music as far as great pop songs go, is condensed into a 7:25 track, the rarest selection of which is an instrumental version of Charles Wolcott's song, "The Reluctant Dragon." We get a couple of lesser-known title tunes but none of the fine numbers from "Bongo" or *Ichabod and Mister Toad* and only one, "Little Toot," from the aptly named *Melody Time*. On Side Four *Song of the South, Cinderella,* and *Peter Pan* are given the musical-digest treatment, with highlights including the excellent voice characterizations in the "Laughing Place" dialogue scene and Ilene Woods expressive overdubbing (*a la* Patti Page) in "Sing Sweet Nightingale." For some reason no excerpts from 1951's *Alice in Wonderland* are included; indeed the film is not even cited in the text.

Side Five commences with a 9:07 *Lady and the Tramp* medley, unusual in that, as far as I know, no original soundtrack was ever issued from this film. In spite of my admiration for the supreme vocal artistry of Peggy Lee, I've always found this score, co-authored by Lee and Sonny Burke, one of the dullest. It is followed by a *Sleeping Beauty* track that emphasizes the romantic, lyrical elements of Bruns's orchestral choral Tchaikowsky adaptation (with a little Maleficent dialogue, the "Curse" scene, also included), and by a five-minute excerpt from *Vanishing Prairie* by Paul Smith, perhaps the only composer to manifest a distinctive, individual compositional style in late Disney music. (I would have preferred hearing Smith's masterpiece, *Living Desert*, instead). Side Six presents twelve minutes of "Later Animated Years" tunes, mainly Sherman Brothers' *Pooh* and *Jungle Book* excerpts, pleasant and inoffensive, and concludes with what is perhaps the nadir of post-Walt music, three atrocities from *Robin Hood*. Happily, the side concludes with eight minutes of the expressive music for *Rescuers*, the best post-Walt score so far.

Side Seven is devoted entirely to the Shermans' *Mary Poppins* score. (Four pages are devoted to this film in the accompanying booklet, giving it more weight than *Snow White*, *Pinocchio*, and *Fantasia* combined!) An anti-climactic Side Eight features *Pete's Dragon* selections and two tracks of Disney World/Land music.

My interest in *Magical Music* flagged by the end of Side Four, though I do like mellow, laid-back sixties sound of *Rescuers*, and Kasha and Hirschhorn's "Candle on the Water" is an effectively moving song even if it *is* essentially a re-write of their earlier "Morning After" (from *Poseidon Adventure*). I felt the absence of any early Silly Symphony scores was a glaring omission as was the fact that the "digest" tracks often slighted the film's expressive background scores or buried them under dialogue and sound effects. Ironically, in my set the first two records were plagued with excessive pre-echo and awful surfaces while the two expendable Magic Kingdom tracks were brilliantly engineered and pristine! The quality of the sound in the older animated excerpts was somewhat better defined than in the Disneyland original soundtracks but, at least judging from my copies of several years back, the Disneyland albums have much quieter surfaces and less distracting pre-echo. The Ovation booklet features well-reproduced color illustrations but most of them are recycled from Finch's *Art of Walt Disney* and its spinoffs, and the text is little more than a rehash of other writing on Disney and tells nothing new or detailed about the studio's pioneering in sound-reproduction and recording techniques or about Disney's various musicians. If you've just landed from Metaluna and have never heard any Disney music, *A Magical Music* could be a revelation for you; but for buffs I'm afraid it's only another sadly mis-produced opportunity.

Postscript: Those with an interest in the vintage scores are advised to check out the Disneyland original soundtrack albums. The out-of-print (and apparently rare) WDL 4000 series is the best and features generous background music tracks; the currently available DQ-1200 series features less music but complete songs and the records are well-edited and engineered. The *Dumbo* soundtrack (Disneyland DQ-1204) is especially well-done.

That Other Talking Pig

By MIKE BARRIER

My interest in *Fairy Tales and After* by Roger Sale (Harvard, $11.00) was piqued when I read a review of it by William Plummer in the *Washington Post* that began this way:

"About this book, and the business of making a critical judgment, I'm sure many readers will find themselves in my position. I will forgive Roger Sale almost anything because, unhoped-for windfall, he spends a dozen pages talking about the favorite writer of my childhood. Imagine, half a chapter on Walter R. Brooks and his Freddy the Pig series."

I can't say that Walter R. Brooks was the favorite writer of my childhood that title belonged indisputably to Carl Barks—but certainly he was my favorite among those authors who wrote for books in hard covers. I was an addict for many years (I still recall my sickening disappointment at Christmas in 1950, when I opened a package and found not a Freddy book but—ugh—a dictionary.) I read everything Brooks wrote, and my interest slackened only in the middle fifties; not so much because I was growing older, although I'm sure that was part of it, as because Brooks's stories were deteriorating. Oddly, they went into decline at about the same time Barks's stories did, and for the same reasons. Brooks was obviously getting tired of the trap he had built for himself by creating such popular characters as Freddy, Jinx the cat, and Mrs. Wiggins the cow, and he was seeking relief by introducing elements that didn't really belong, such as visiting Martians. Barks had built the same sort of trap for himself with Uncle Scrooge, and instead of bringing Martians to earth, he sent his ducks into outer space. Both writers seemed to think that by introducing such wildly fantastic elements into their otherwise down-to-earth stories they could relax and not pay as much attention to plausibility as before.

The resemblance extends even further. In Brooks's later stories, the author's highly conservative upstate New York politics started sticking out, just as Barks's highly conservative California politics started sticking out in *his* later stories.

These were my impressions as a child, and I confirmed them about ten years ago, when I read most of the Brooks books in sequence. Again, as in the fifties, I had to call it quits before I got to the end, because the stories had gone slack.

But when they were good, they were

• • • "I can," she said. "Leave it to me." • • •

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An illustration by Kurt Wiese from Wiggins for President.

© Walt Disney Productions

This moment in the story of "Snow White," when the girl bites into the red half of an apple, has been given a variety of interpretations, some of them discussed by Roger Sale in Fairy Tales and After.

wonderful, in a very funny, homely, unpretentious way. I am sure that the Freddy books will never become a cult item, because their appeal is so uncomplicated, but I am equally sure that they will be rediscovered and read with great enjoyment for many years to come.

There are aspects of the Freddy books that Sale ignores—it seemed to me, the last time I read them, that Brooks too often excited a thirst for justice that he did not satisfy—but he is very good on those aspects of the books that he does discuss. He brings out very nicely the books' sense of animals and people constantly working out problems and making the little adjustments required by living together. On more than one occasion, I found myself wishing that he had written a

little more about one of the authors he scrutinizes. He is, for example, extraordinarily perceptive about the strengths of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, but he says nothing about one side of the book that has irritated me since I first read it, and continues to do so; that is, Grahame's utter indifference to inconsistencies of scale. Toad is, in one chapter, clearly intended to be of normal toad size, and so a very small animal; in another chapter, he is large enough to disguise himself as a washerwoman. (Ernest Shepard, the most famous of the book's illustrators, coped heroically but unsuccessfully with these inconsistencies.)

Fairy Tales and After is a book devoted to literary criticism of famous, and not so famous, children's books. Although the chapters are arranged chronologically, the book is in no sense a history; the few connections that Sale does make seem simple and natural. For the most part, he simply deals with each author on his or her own terms, just as he would in a book that contained essays on, say, Dickens, Conrad, and Faulkner.

One of the great virtues of *Fairy Tales and After* is, in fact, that there is not a trace of condescension in it, just as there is no condescension in the best children's books. Children's literature, as Sale makes clear, is not necessarily inferior to books intended for adults; it is simply different. He very sensibly says, "Of course, anyone who writes a book for children will make some adjustments, but when the writer is really concerned with the tale...the adjustments are easily made, since they will concern themselves with a simplification of vocabulary and the avoidance of prolonged abstract arguments and discourse." Moreover, children's stories, as Sale makes clear, enjoy one large advantage that adult literature no longer has: they can make easy and unself-conscious use of talking animals. (One of the great moments in the book for me is when Sale points out the superiority of Brooks's *Wiggins for President* to Orwell's *Animal Farm*.)

Throughout the book, Sale's comments are remarkably just and precise. His discussion of fairy tales is particularly valuable as an antidote to Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*; that book describes fairy tales as if they were medicine that must be administered at exactly the right point in a child's development or damage will result. Sale argues much more sensibly that the stories are best understood as reflections of everyday life in much harsher times.

Sale has nothing to say about the animated films based on fairy tales, and I suspect that he has little use for them. Nevertheless, he interprets "Snow White" in a way that can be taken as vindicating Disney's version of the story. Bettelheim condemned Disney in a footnote, saying, "Giving each dwarf a separate name and a distinctive personality...as in the Walt Disney film, seriously interferes with the unconscious understanding that they symbolize an immature pre-individual form of existence which Snow White must transcend. Such ill-considered additions to fairy tales, which seemingly increase the human interest, actually are apt to destroy it because they make it difficult to grasp the story's deeper meaning correctly."

The "deeper meaning", in Bettelheim's view, has to do with growing up, with Snow White's passage through adolescence; but as Sale points out, the concept of adolescence is one that would have not have been known at the time the story came into existence. What the story is about, Sale argues, is the Queen's desire for Snow White's beauty—not for Snow White herself, but for her beauty. In fairy tales, Sale says, "The primary task for women is bearing children, and childbearing was often fatal; whatever other power women had lay in youth and beauty. After a brief blossoming...people grew old rather quickly, and most of the palliatives against a grim and crimped existence were controlled by men... Snow White's stepmother, thus, is involved in a struggle she must lose, to Snow White, but primarily to the passage of time. Her passion is frightening because the passion to be fairest seeks no value beyond itself; the queen doesn't want anything, or anyone, to be fairest with, except her mirror. She has been given only one power, and that one very briefly, and contrary to all our latter-day desires and hopes that sexuality can mature as youth goes and beauty fades, in the world of fairy tales sex is always allied with youth and beauty. For an older woman to fight against these facts and values made her frightening, and no fairy tale can imagine defeating such a woman without also destroying her...Snow White and the Queen are locked in a terrible likeness, because they are the same person at two different stages of life."

The Disney presentation of the story is entirely consistent with this interpretation, but carries it one step further, by suggesting that Snow White has virtues of kindness and compassion and, especially, maternal love that the Queen never had; she will win a victory of some kind over age, with a beauty of spirit if not of the flesh. It is through her relationship with the Dwarfs, and particularly with Grumpy (who obviously comes to love her for reasons that have nothing to do with physical attraction), that her virtues are revealed; if the Dwarfs were not such vivid characters, so that their feelings about her are so clearly visible, the film would never work the way that it does.

Even those writers who praise *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* tend to do so with a certain embarrassment; Christopher Finch, in *The Art of Walt Disney*, cannot refrain from calling it "melodrama," and he is obviously at some loss how to explain the film's power without lapsing into press-release cliches. But there is no need to apologize for *Snow White*, for any reason. In it, Disney accomplished a remarkable feat: he introduced a note of hope and love into a very stark, elemental story without violating the story's basic structure. The film's failures are in its details—Snow White herself just does not look or sound quite right—but they don't count for much when weighed against its great central success. If *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is difficult for everyone to get a

handle on now (and that seems to be the case) it is because we still do not realize just how good a film it is.

People who care about animation tend to regret its association with children's stories, and there are good reasons for that, but Sale's book is a reminder that there are reasons to rejoice in the association as well. Animation and children's stories are both at ease with the fantastic, and this ability to deal matter-of-factly with the impossible should not be surrendered lightly.

A postscript: *Fairy Tales and After* is now available in a pa, erback edition, also from Harvard. *Freddy the Detective* has been issued b/ Dell as one of its Yearling paperbacks. This is, as far as I know, the first Freddy book to be issued in this format, and it is a good way to sample the Brooks series.

The Spinach-eating Zombie

By BILL BLACKBEARD

Browsers who spot *Popeye: The First Fifty Years* by Bud Sagendorf (Workman/King Features, paper, $8.95) on sale are encouraged to pick it up for a prolonged once-over despite the cover art and Sagendorf byline: it contains some twelve Popeye/*Thimble Theatre* color Sundays by E.C. Segar in reasonably readable size, one color Segar *Sappo*, and a number of panels and episodes from the Segar dailies of the 1920s and '30s. Unfortunately, the jarringly cruder Sagendorf work of recent years is elsewhere very much in evidence, occupying a disproportionate sixty-four pages of color, and much of the black and white page space. If the potential purchaser is a Sagendorf freak, of course, he will be goshgeediddilywhickered happy over

THIMBLE THEATRE—Featuring POPEYE– A Little Action, Please

By E. C. Segar

THEY'VE BEEN FIGHTING FOR FOUR HOURS!
HOW CAN THEY STAND IT?
SUPER MEN !!!
HEAVENS! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE!
YA CAN'T STOP ME! I DON'T FEEL NOTHIN, BLAST YA!
G-R-R!!
(2)

Segar unleashed Popeye in 1932.

King Features Syndicate, Inc.

the book; anyone else will have to determine for himself whether the small but precious Segar cargo is worth the fare for what is essentially a Sagendorf vanity job paid for by King Features.

An examination reveals that three of the color Segar Sundays (89, 104, 116) are missing one panel apiece, although no textual notice is taken of this; two of the Sundays are already in print in my own *Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Strips* (89, 104); and all of the Segar daily strip material (except for the 1921 episode on page 16, lifted from Becker's *Comic Art in America*) is also currently available in books or mail-order back issues from Nostalgia Press, Hyperion Press, and Street Enterprises (*Menomenee Falls Guardian*). In short, the book is a quick scissors-and-paste job so far as the Segar content is concerned, made up of easily accessible current stuff and some old Sunday pages in the possession of Sagendorf or a friend. (It is typical of this sort of amateur strip "history," of course, that no credit is given to any of the above-mentioned book sources for the daily episodes or other Segar cuts, or to the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, from whose painstakingly-accumulated files they all originated.)

Sagendorf's text, written in the tone of arrested naivete typical of his Popeye strip, has some reference value for Segar buffs (King Features' crippling assaults on Segar's work in the 1930s are described in surprisingly frank detail, and a number of strip assistant Sagendorf's recollections of Segar's life in Santa Monica are novel and charming), but none concerning the odd ups-and-downs of his own career with King Features. There was no attempt at fact-checking in the writing, or at comprehensive data gathering: Sagendorf has Segar jumping from *Charlie Chaplin's Comic Capers* to *Looping the Loop* in the teens without mentioning Segar's intervening Sunday page, *Barry the Boob*, done, like *Capers*, for the Chicago *Record-Herald*; he gets that paper's name wrong, calling it the *Herald*; he doesn't seem to know that Segar was *bought* by

the Chicago *American* with the other assets of the defunct *Record-Herald*; he makes no mention of Segar's national recognition as a basement craftsman through the pages of such magazines as *Popular Mechanics* and *Mechanix Illustrated* in the 1930s; he doesn't know that the Bluto of the animated Max Fleischer cartoons came from a daily strip story Segar was drawing at the time the animated cartoon series was launched (nor does he seem aware that Segar created the Brutus name in his *Barry the Boob* page); he thinks the *Thimble Theatre dramatis personae* live in a village, despite the constant urban atmosphere of the original Segar strip, etc., etc.

A couple of interesting color pages of Popeye toys and artifacts plus an amusing Segar tribute to Herriman, done in a simulation of Herriman's style (which deserved a full page, but is reduced to playing-card dimensions so that one or another of Sagendorf's gargoyle Segar imitations can leer at us from an adjacent page in a much larger size), add to such appeal as the book may have for the Segar fan. The one remaining question is why Sagendorf subjected his work to such immediate comparative ridicule by placing it in continual proximity to Segar's original material—it is a little as if Calvin Coolidge had published a collection of his presidential addresses in the same volume with a set of Abraham Lincoln's. Certainly the book's subtitle is misleading: there were ten glorious years of Segar's Popeye (1929-38), then there were forty pointless years of Popeye puppets in other hands (1939-79), but there is *no* way this side of madness that the two periods can be combined into a congruent fifty. Sagendorf's misguided attempt to do so is a pathetic disaster.

NB: Nothing in the above review is intended to suggest any lack of regard on my part for Sagendorf as a comic artist. There is certainly nothing wrong with naivete or childishness itself in comic strip art, as has been demonstrated over the decades by such

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Sagendorf unlimbers his imitation in 1962.

classically delightful strips as Johnny Gruelle's *Mr. Twee Deedle* and *Brutus*, Bunny Schultze's early *Foxy Grandpa*, or Harrison Cady's *Peter Rabbit*. Sagendorf's own King Features daily strip of some twenty years ago, *Spur Line* (still the only humorous strip to deal with railroading as a theme), was comically effective in its own terms, a minor work of real worth, in the same meritorious league as such equally little-known but highly enjoyable strips as George Swan's *High-Pressure Pete*, Elmer Woggon's *Skylark*, Marge Henderson's *Steaming Youth*, or Cecil Jensen's *Elmo*. The short-lived *Spur Line*, charmingly rendered in Sagendorf's Segar-derived style (itself often eye-catching and effective, so long as it is not used in a fruitless attempt to mimic Segar's powerful and inimitable line), was a gay, lightly suspenseful comic melodrama that brightened any comic page lucky enough to feature it. The characters were not individually memorable (as they rarely are in the work of strip *naifs*), but functioned adequately in terms of the comic demands put on them by the story line. It is a pity that Sagendorf was not encouraged by King Features to continue along this kind of independent line, rather than being assigned to conduct the spasmodically animated corpse of Segar's long-dead strip to its syndicated grave. The several thousand people who will see and read the *Popeye* book reviewed above are only a handful compared to the tens of thousands who would be reading any mildly successful daily comic strip—and it is a sure bet that *Spur Line* in its first year of release had many more readers than Sagendorf's nationally-unseen *Thimble Theatre* strip has today. There is still time for Sagendorf to cut his losses and go his own way; one can only hope that he does.

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